

**La República Árabe
Saharai Democrática**



**الجمهورية العربية
الصحراوية الديمقراطية**

**Combined periodic report of all outstanding reports covering
the period 2013 to 2025 of the Saharawi Republic submitted
to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights**

**In accordance with Article 62 of the African Charter on Human and
Peoples' Rights.**

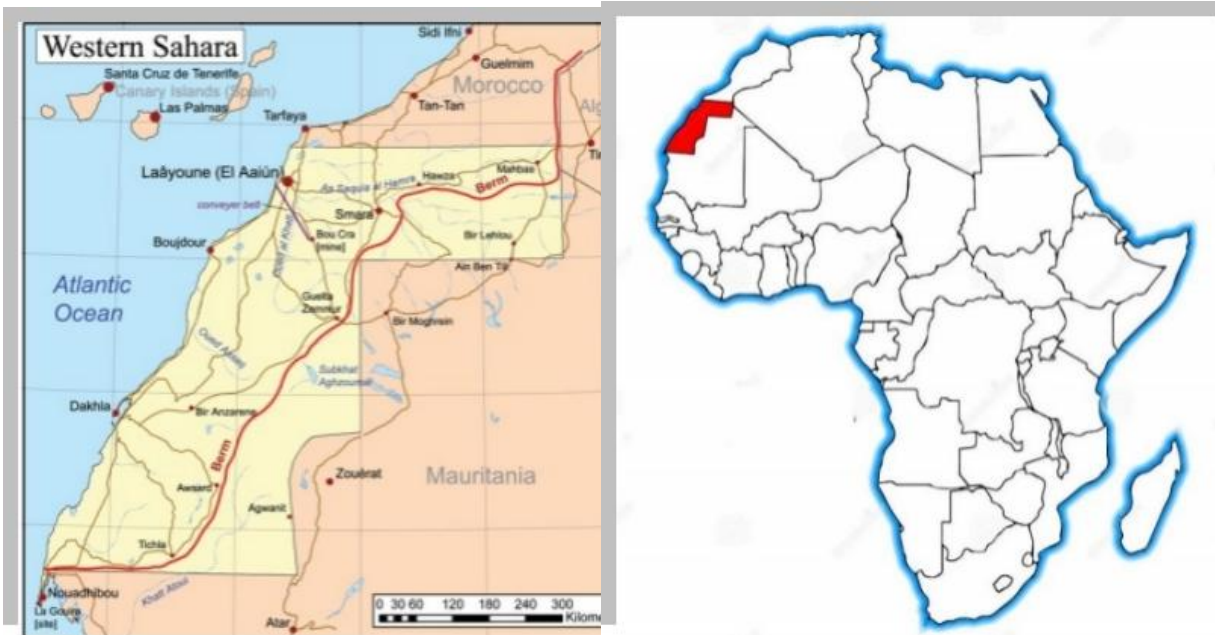
January 2026

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PART I

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE SAHARAWI ARAB DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC



1. Territory, population and indicators

- **Area:** 284,000 km²
- **Population:** 500,000 inhabitants (2024)
- **Languages:** Arabic (official language), Spanish (second language), Hassanya (national dialect)
- **Religion :** islam
- **Currency:** the peseta

2. Economic potential and impact of occupation

The Saharawi Republic has immense economic potential that predisposes it to be among the richest countries on the African continent. It has considerable deposits of high-quality phosphates, as well as one of the largest fish riches in the world, due to its strategic position on the Atlantic Ocean. In addition, there are strong indications of the presence of undeveloped mineral resources. However, assessing the real volume of this wealth, as well as assessing its potential economic return, remains extremely difficult in the absence of reliable and transparent statistics. This opacity is the result of the systematic censorship imposed by the occupation, which hinders access to any economic or human data concerning the occupied

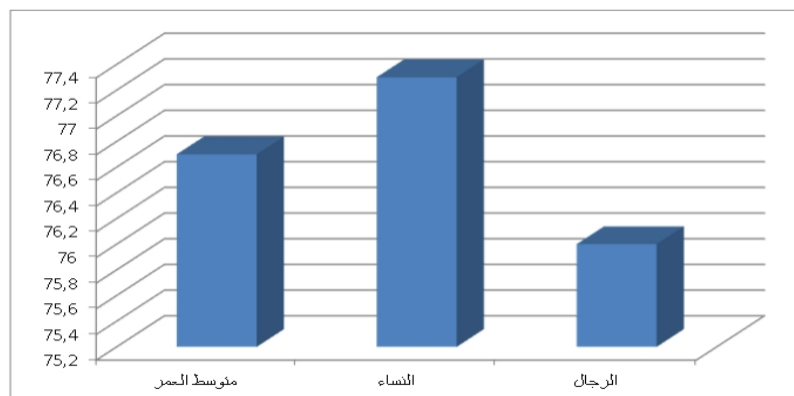
territories, in an apparent attempt to conceal the reality and mask the extent of the looting taking place.

In terms of tourism, the Saharawi Republic has exceptional assets allowing it to develop a diversified and sustainable model, combining ecological and maritime tourism, Saharan and cultural tourism, thanks to its vast desert area, its preserved Atlantic coasts and its rich cultural and human heritage. However, this sector is also distorted by systematic instrumentalization: the Moroccan occupation exploits it to convey a false image of "development" in the occupied areas, without an independent or verifiable statistical basis, while prohibiting free access to international observers and independent researchers. Thus, any reference to tourism figures or indicators is only a propaganda tool in the service of the occupation agenda, without any real benefit for Saharawi citizens.

In terms of renewable energy, the Saharawi Republic is among the most promising regions in the world, due to its high rates of sunshine throughout the year and the power and regularity of its winds, opening up considerable prospects for investment in solar energy, wind energy and green hydrogen. However, these strategic potentialities are now being exploited outside any legitimate sovereign framework, under the effect of the illegal Moroccan military occupation and with the complicity of certain states and foreign companies that not only appropriate the resources, but also contribute to the financing of the occupation.

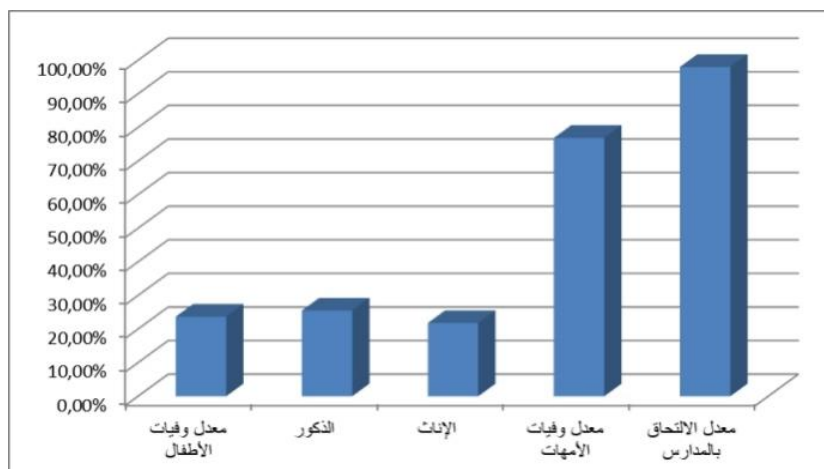
3. SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS (2024)

- **Average life expectancy:** 76.7 years
 - Women: 77.3 years
 - Male: 76 years



- **Infant mortality rate:** 23.7 per cent
 - Boys: 25.5%
 - Girls: 21.8%

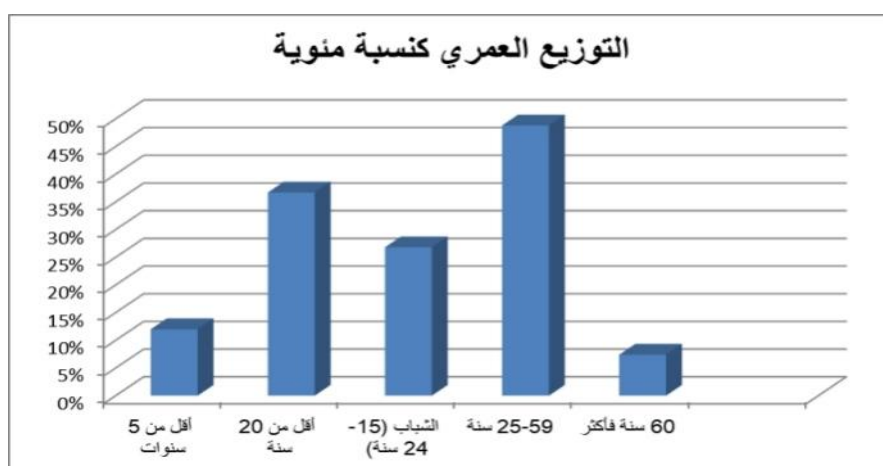
- **Maternal mortality ratio:** 76.9 per cent
- **Enrolment rate:** 98%



Age distribution (in percent)

- Under 5 years old: 12%
- Under 20 years of age: 36.7%
- Youth (15–24 years): 26.8%
- 25–59 years: 48.8%
- 60 years and older: 7.4%

Human Development Index (2024): 0.617



4. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Saharawi institutional framework is based on:

A. Constitutional mechanisms Constitutional mechanisms are based on political bodies and judicial institutions. The 1995 Constitution, amended in January 2023, enshrines the principle of the separation of powers (executive, legislative, judicial) within the framework of a presidential regime.

Legislative power is exercised by a National Council (Parliament), which guarantees **democratic** and free expression, through the following functions: monitoring government action, passing laws and dealing with human rights issues by its standing committees. Since the constitutional reform of January 2023, the Council has become bicameral, composed of two chambers:

B. The National People's Council

It is composed of 51 deputies representing various sensitivities, elected by direct universal suffrage.

C. The Advisory Council

It has 191 members, including notables and eminent personalities representing all components of Saharawi society. For the first time, 11 women sit on it.

D. Measures of women's representation

The 2023 organic law provides for the application of a quota of at least 33% of female candidates on the electoral lists; non-compliant lists are rejected. As a result of this policy, the proportion of women in Parliament reached 42% in the April 2023 elections, an increase of 9% compared to the previous elections where they accounted for 33%. This rate of 42% is among the highest among African parliaments.

5. EXECUTIVE POWER

Executive power is exercised by:

- **The President of the Republic:** Head of State and guarantor of national unity, elected by direct universal suffrage by the General People's Congress of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front), for a three-year term renewable once for a period of one year.
- **The Prime Minister:** responsible for implementing the government programme, coordinating the action of the executive and submitting his programme to the National People's Council for approval.

6. THE SAHARAWI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AND THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

A. Membership and commitments

The Saharawi Republic signed the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on 10 April 1986, ratified it on 2 May 1986 and presented its first periodic report at the 33rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (May 2003, Niger), and its second periodic report at the 55th Ordinary Session (May 2014, Angola). This combined report covers the period 2013–2025.

This report was prepared by a joint governmental working group, bringing together representatives of various ministries and sectors concerned with the implementation of the Saharawi Republic's commitments under the African Charter. The process was based on a participatory approach, including broad consultations with all stakeholders: public institutions and bodies, civil society actors, as well as specialized experts. In this context, the working group has conducted a series of consultations with the competent authorities in order to collect relevant data and involve sectoral experts in the drafting of the parts relevant to their field, while ensuring the active participation of civil society organisations at all stages. The process concluded with the convening of two final meetings, held under the authority of the Saharawi Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Saharawi National Human Rights Commission. These sessions were devoted to the in-depth examination of the final version of the report, in the presence of all the partners concerned, before its official adoption and formal validation.

B. Progress on democracy and the rule of law

Since the last report submitted by the Saharawi Republic, tangible progress has been made in the process of building the State and consolidating the foundations of good governance. Significant progress has been made in strengthening democratic practice and strengthening the rule of law, through institutional reforms that have expanded the space for political freedoms and fostered greater citizen participation in public affairs.

The judiciary has seen substantial improvements, strengthening its independence and its ability to protect rights and ensure the rule of law. At the same time, ongoing reforms in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms show an increased commitment to legal and constitutional norms.

These achievements have been achieved despite the major challenges related to the persistence of the illegal Moroccan military occupation over a large part of the national territory, depriving the Saharawi State of control of its economic resources, and despite the complicity of some external powers in maintaining this colonial situation. Nevertheless, the Saharawi Republic has continued to implement structural reforms aimed at consolidating respect for human rights, expanding individual and collective freedoms, enhancing transparency and promoting the values of justice and equality, reflecting a constant political will to build strong institutions that guarantee fundamental rights.

In this context, a set of organic laws was prepared and adopted following extensive participatory debates on the electoral system, media regulation, ensuring women's

representation in elected assemblies, freedom of association, as well as the regulation of wilayas (provinces) and municipalities, among others. These texts are now in force, strengthening the national legal framework, supporting the process of good governance and contributing to the institutional development of the Saharawi Republic.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. The Saharawi Republic: Genesis, challenges and the struggle for the right of the Sahrawi people to freedom and self-determination

The Sahrawi Republic is located in Northwest Africa, between latitudes 27°40 North and 20°47 South. It is bordered by Algeria (41 km) to the northeast, Morocco (500 km) to the north, and Mauritania (1,570 km) to the east and south, with an Atlantic coastline of about 1,200 km. Its surface area is 284,000 km² and its population is close to half a million inhabitants, of Arab, Berber and African origin. The Hassanya language is the national dialect, Arabic is the official

language, and Spanish is the second language. The population practices Sunni Islam according to the Maliki rite.

The territory is divided into five main regions: Saguia elHamra (north), Zemmour (central-east), Adrar Suttuf (central-south), Tiris (southeast), and theAtlantic coast (west). The administrative capital is Laâyoune (in the occupied areas), while Bir Lahlou is consideredastheprovisional capital in the liberated areas, alongsidemajor cities such as Smara, Dakhla, Boujdour and Aousserd.

The Sahrawi Republic was proclaimed on 27 February 1976 by the national liberation movement, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front), in the locality of Bir Lahlou, the day after the official withdrawal of Spain, a colonial power, on 26 February 1976. The purpose of this proclamation was to fill the legal vacuum created by this unilateral withdrawal, which took place without Spain having assumed its legal obligations relating to the completion of the decolonization process, which has been placed under the supervision and requirements of the United Nations since the 1960s.

The Saharawi Republic bases the legitimacy of its institutions on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1975, which confirmed the absence of any external sovereignty over the territory and recognized the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 1514 of 14 December 1960 (Annex 1). It is also based on the popular will expressed by the Saharawis through their resistance to Spanish colonialism and then to the Moroccan occupation, a desire recognized by the United Nations General Assembly fact-finding mission in 1975.

On 4 March 1976, the Provisional National Council announced the formation of the first Sahrawi government, composed of three ministries (Defence, Foreign Affairs, Interior and Justice) and five Secretaries of State (Health and Social Affairs, Education, Information, Finance and Trade, Energy and Communications), under the authority of the Council of Ministers.

2. Political system and Constitution

The Sahrawi Republic adopts a pluralist democratic system in accordance with its Constitution, although political power remains concentrated in the hands of the Frente Polisario until the completion of national liberation. The Constitution enshrines the separation of the three powers:

- **The National Council (Parliament):** the legislative body responsible for drafting laws, monitoring government action, approving the budget and ratifying international treaties.
- **The judiciary:** independent, organized into jurisdictions ranging from the courts of first instance to the Supreme Court.

- **The Government:** an executive body responsible for the implementation of laws and programmes, headed by the President of the Republic, Secretary-General of the Polisario Front.

3. International recognition and membership in the African Union

Since its proclamation, the Saharawi Republic has obtained diplomatic recognition from 84 states around the world. It became a member of the Organization of African Unity in 1982 and a founding member of the African Union in 2002. It enjoys observer status at the United Nations through the Polisario Front, which has been recognised as the legitimate political representative of the Saharawi people by UN resolutions since the 1970s. The Front has political offices in most of the world's capitals, while the Saharawi Republic is represented by embassies and diplomatic missions in several countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

4. National Emblems and Official Days

- **Flag:** composed of the colors black, white, green and red, with a crescent and a red star.
- **National anthem:** *Ya Bani al-Sahra* ("O son of the Sahara").
- **Currency:** the Sahrawi peseta (symbolic, not used in current transactions).

National Days

- **17 June:** Soulèvement by Zemla (1970)
- **18 June:** Day of the Saharawi Disappeared (1970, kidnapping of Sidi Mohamed Sidi Ibrahim Basiri)
- **10 May:** Foundation of the Polisario Front (1973)
- **20 May:** Launch of the armed struggle against Spanish colonialism (1973)
- **9 June:** Martyrs' Day (death of El Ouali Mustapha Sayed, first Secretary General of the Polisario and first President of the Saharawi State, 1976)
- **12 October:** National Unity Day (1975)
- **27 February:** Proclamation of the Sahrawi Republic (1976)
- **8 November:** Saharawi Prisoner's Day (2010, brutal repression of the Gdeim Izik camp)

5. Efforts for the completion of the decolonization process and the position of the Saharawi situation

Since its proclamation on 27 February 1976, the Saharawi Republic has faced a partial occupation of its territory by the Kingdom of Morocco, in a context marked by secret

agreements with the former colonial power Spain. Spain had exercised its colonial domination over Western Sahara from 1884 until 26 February 1976, without completing the decolonization process in accordance with the resolutions of international law.

As a result of this unilateral withdrawal, the Saharawi people, led by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front), proclaimed the Saharawi Republic as an independent State, an expression of the free will of the people of Western Sahara and their legitimate aspiration to independence and self-determination. The Kingdom of Morocco then embarked on a vast expansionist military campaign, based on secret agreements with Spain and Mauritania, invading a large part of the Saharawi territory and causing destruction and abuses in the occupied areas.

Since the 1960s, and well before the Moroccan occupation, the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations have assumed their responsibilities in the process of decolonization of Western Sahara, reaffirming the inalienable right of the Saharawi people to self-determination through a free, fair and transparent referendum. However, all United Nations and African initiatives aimed at a peaceful solution to the conflict have remained ineffective, due to Morocco's intransigence and its persistent refusal to allow the Saharawi people to exercise their democratic right.

In this context, the Saharawi Republic reaffirms its categorical rejection of any political solution that does not explicitly and clearly guarantee the free and independent exercise of the Saharawi people's right to self-determination, without coercion or preconditions. It deeply deplores the continuation by the Moroccan occupation regime of its policy of blocking the UN and African settlement process, since the adoption of the 1991 peace plan accepted by the two parties.

The Saharawi Republic demands the strict application of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, to which Morocco acceded in 2017, in particular articles 3 and 4 enshrining respect for borders inherited from colonization and the inviolability of the territorial integrity of member states. It also insists on the need to ensure the application of Article 20 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in Western Sahara, as in other African regions, and rejects any political or unilateral attempt to hinder its implementation.

Although the Saharawi struggle has favoured political and diplomatic means over the past three decades, the Moroccan military attack on peaceful Saharawi demonstrators in the Guerguerat area on 13 November 2020 constituted a serious violation of the ceasefire. This act led to the resumption of armed struggle by the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army from 14 November 2020, as a legitimate right of defence, in accordance with the principles of international law. The ceasefire had been in force since 6 September 1991 under the supervision of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

Since November 2020, military clashes have intensified, with the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army carrying out continuous operations against the positions and bases of the occupying

forces, in a context of political deadlock. This situation, repeatedly described by the United Nations as a serious threat to regional security and stability, calls for the establishment of a just and effective international mechanism to end the occupation and enable the Saharawi people to exercise their right to self-determination.

Since the adoption of the UN-African peace plan in 1991 and the establishment of the ceasefire by Security Council Resolution 690, MINURSO has failed to fulfil its main mandate: to organise the self-determination referendum. Nor has it succeeded in accomplishing other missions entrusted to it, such as the release of detainees, carried out only once in 1996, thus revealing the limits of its action and its inability to achieve the objectives for which it was created. This failure is attributable to Moroccan obstacles, which are reflected in:

- **Settler colonisation:** the occupied territories have been massively occupied by Moroccan settlers, representing more than 75% of the population, as implicitly recognised by the Court of Justice of the European Union (paragraph 157 of the judgment of 4 October 2024, amended on 15 January 2025).
- **Repression:** Peaceful demonstrations are systematically repressed in the occupied areas, with violations of the civil, political, economic and cultural rights of the Saharawi people. Citizens are subjected to arrests, enforced disappearances, torture and arbitrary evictions.
- **Media blockade:** Moroccan authorities deny access to international observers and the media, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has not been able to visit Sahrawi detainees since 1996. Between 2014 and 24 August 2025, around 329 foreign observers from more than 21 nationalities (parliamentarians, human rights defenders, journalists, etc.) were expelled from the occupied territories, prevented from documenting the human rights situation. In 2025 alone, 27 foreign observers, including deputies, lawyers and journalists from Spain, the United States and Portugal, were expelled, confirming the continuation of this policy of blockade and obstruction of international surveillance. UN human rights mechanisms have not been able to visit the country since 2015, and mechanisms and rapporteurs of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights have never been allowed to visit the occupied areas.
- **Expulsion of MINURSO members**

In 2016, Moroccan occupation authorities expelled 84 members of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), including African Union observers. This decision followed statements by the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, describing the Moroccan presence in Western Sahara as a "situation of occupation", thus confirming the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly Nos. 34/37 (1979) and 35/19 (1980). The Security Council and the African Union have condemned these acts, calling for the return of the African contingent and for a peaceful and equitable settlement guaranteeing the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination, in accordance with Article 20 of the African Charter on Human

and Peoples' Rights. Nevertheless, the mission remains deprived of its African component.

6. Legal opinions and court decisions reaffirming the independence of Western Sahara from Morocco

The Saharawi people have won significant legal and judicial victories against the continued plundering of their natural wealth by Morocco and some European actors, as well as against the attempts by Morocco and its allies to impose a colonial fait accompli in Western Sahara, aimed at annihilating the inalienable right of the Saharawi people to self-determination. Among these decisions and opinions:

- 1) **2015:** Legal opinion from the Office of the Legal Adviser of the African Union, confirming that the Moroccan presence in Western Sahara constitutes an illegal military occupation, and that the Saharawi Republic is the legitimate state and government of the territory. The opinion specifies that any exploitation of Saharawi natural resources is illegal without consultation with the Saharawi people and their legitimate representative, the Polisario Front and the Saharawi Republic.
- 2) **10 December 2015:** The General Court of the European Union (case T512/12) annuls a decision of the Council of the EU on the application of an agricultural agreement with Morocco in Western Sahara.
- 3) **21 December 2016:** The Court of Justice of the European Union (C104/16 P) establishes that Western Sahara is a "distinct and separate" territory from Morocco, and that the agreements concluded with the latter cannot apply to it without the consent of the Saharawi people.
- 4) **15 June 2017:** The High Court of South Africa orders the precautionary seizure of a shipment of Saharawi phosphates (NM *Cherry Blossom* case), recognising the legitimate property of the Saharawi people and not that of the Société de Marocaine de Phosphate.
- 5) **23 February 2018:** The High Court of South Africa issues a final judgment confirming that the cargo belongs to the Saharawi Republic and that its extraction was done without the consent of the Saharawi people.
- 6) **27 February 2018:** The Court of Justice of the European Union (Case C-266/16 Western Sahara Campaign UK) ruled that the fisheries agreement concluded between the European Union and Morocco does not apply to the waters of Western Sahara. This decision reaffirms the principle of consent and the specificity of this territory
- 7) **29 September 2021:** The General Court of the European Union (Case T-279/19 and Joined Cases T-344/19 and T-356/19) annulled the decisions of the Council of the European Union that had approved the amendment of the agricultural and fisheries agreements concluded with Morocco in order to extend them to Western Sahara. The

Court found that these agreements had not received the consent of the Saharawi people through their legitimate representative, the Polisario Front.

- 8) **4 October 2024:** The Court of Justice of the European Union (in its final judgments on appeals C-778/21 P, C-798/21 P, C-779/21 P and C-799/21 P) dismissed the actions brought by the European Council and the European Commission against the previous decision annulling the Euro-Moroccan trade agreements on the grounds that they included the territory and products of Western Sahara. It confirmed that the 2019 agreements (agriculture and fisheries) concluded with Morocco had been adopted in violation of the principle of self-determination and without the consent of the Saharawi people. This decision thus consecrates the culmination of the Saharawi litigation process within the European Union.

7. Persistent and systematic violations of human rights

Numerous international, regional and Saharawi organisations have documented serious violations in the occupied territories: arbitrary arrests, torture, unfair trials, enforced disappearances, repression of peaceful demonstrations, media blockade, as well as illegal exploitation of natural resources by Morocco and foreign companies. These practices violate international economic law, threaten regional stability and create new forms of colonialism.

Among the organizations that have denounced these violations:

- Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Front Line Defenders, Robert Kennedy Foundation for Human Rights, Freedom House, NOVACT (Spain), International Observatory of Natural Resources of Western Sahara (WSRW).
- The rapporteurs and mechanisms of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.
- Saharawi organisations: Saharawi Human Rights Commission, AFAPREDESA (Association of Families of Saharawi Prisoners and Disappeared Persons), ASVDH (Association of Victims of Serious Violations Committed by the Moroccan State), CODESA (Collective of Saharawi Human Rights Defenders), SONREP (Saharawi Observatory for Natural Resources and the Protection of the Environment) ISACOM (Sahrawi Authority against the Moroccan Occupation), as well as the League for the Protection of Saharawi Prisoners in Moroccan Prisons.

8. The international role in the protection of human rights

The UN has not yet succeeded in completing the process of decolonization of Western Sahara, due to Morocco's obstruction but also the support of some states for the occupation. Countries such as the United States, France, Spain and Israel support Morocco's proposal for "autonomy", while Morocco has no rights to the territory and cannot grant it such status. The Saharawi people, represented by the Polisario Front and the Saharawi Republic, reject this colonial

approach and remain committed to respect for international law and the free exercise of their right to self-determination.

Thus, the organization of a referendum on self-determination remains the only legitimate, realistic solution in accordance with international law, as confirmed by the United Nations General Assembly and the International Court of Justice. The persistence of the Moroccan occupation constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the Geneva Conventions and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, prolongs the conflict and threatens regional stability, especially since military clashes have resumed since the breakdown of the ceasefire in 2020.

PART II

RESPONSE TO THE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has a direct and fundamental legal responsibility for the monitoring, protection and promotion of human rights in all States Parties to the African Charter, without exception or restriction. This responsibility derives from the relevant provisions of the Charter, in particular articles 1, 19, 20 (123), 21, 22, 23, 45, 46, 60 and others, which require the Commission to monitor the commitments of States parties, to monitor the human rights situation, to receive complaints, to issue recommendations, but also to call for solidarity and the fight against all forms of colonialism, occupation and racial discrimination. This legal competence is contractual and binding in nature; it may in no way be suspended, limited or subordinated to political considerations or to circumstantial priorities of the deliberative organs of the African Union. The protection of human rights was

indeed the very essence of the Charter and the basis of the Commission's existence, and could not be impeded under any circumstances.

Thus, the argument that certain political decisions adopted at African Union summits could take precedence over the Commission's mandate, as has happened in recent years with regard to the human rights situation in Western Sahara, has no legal basis and explicitly contradicts the text and spirit of the Charter. The Commission's mandate does not derive its mandate from reviewable political decisions, but from a legal instrument that is binding on States parties. The decisions of the summits should not be used as a pretext for suspending the fulfilment of its obligations towards the Saharan people, particularly in the face of the serious and systematic violations committed in the occupied territories. The continued marginalization of the Commission's role in that context not only undermined the protection of human rights, but jeopardized the credibility of the entire African protection system, particularly in areas subject to foreign occupation and unresolved conflicts.

1. Introduction (paragraph 15)

The Saharawi Republic thanks the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights for the in-depth examination of its combined report (2002/2012), presented at the 55th Ordinary Session held in Luanda (Angola) from 28 April to 12 May 2014, as well as for all the observations and recommendations made in order to strengthen its capacity to honour its human rights commitments.

A Saharawi delegation, led by His Excellency Mr. Hamada Salma Daf, former Minister of Justice, and including Mr. Aba Elhassan Salek and Mr. Sidi Mohamed Agay, participated fully in this constructive dialogue with the Commission.

The Saharawi Republic reaffirms its firm commitment to respect and implement its obligations as a State Party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, ratified on 2 May 1986. It welcomes the Commission's recognition of the importance of the ongoing dialogue and expresses its readiness to continue this cooperation based on transparency and openness, with the aim of promoting and protecting human rights in the territories under its administration, for the benefit of the Saharawi people.

At the same time, the Saharawi Republic stresses the need to develop effective mechanisms to guarantee the protection of human rights in the occupied territories of its national territory, or at the very least to reveal and document the systematic violations committed there. To this end, it stresses the importance of the reports of international organizations and relevant mechanisms, as well as the use of all available means, including the adoption of reports from Saharawi organizations operating in the occupied areas or the establishment of digital communications with them and with victims, in order to circumvent the blockade imposed by Morocco, which prevented hundreds of international organisations and observers from accessing the territory.

2. Positive aspects (paragraph 636)

The Saharawi Republic welcomes the Commission's positive observations on the progress made in the implementation of the African Charter:

A. Political commitment and stakeholder participation (paragraphs 67)

The Saharawi Republic reaffirms its commitment to international commitments and to the promotion of the participation of civil society in the formulation of human rights policies and reports.

B. Constitutional framework and ratification of international instruments (paragraph 811)

- The 2019 Constitution incorporates all the fundamental rights enshrined in the African Charter.
- The ratification or signing of major instruments, such as the Protocol Relating to the African Court and the Kampala Convention, reflects the Republic's commitment to regional and international standards.

C. Right to self-determination and diplomatic efforts (9)

The diplomatic efforts of the Saharawi Republic focus on strengthening the international recognition of its state institutions as an "irreversible continental and international" reality, and on resisting initiatives aimed at imposing Moroccan sovereignty over the territory.

The Saharawi Republic considers that the right to self-determination is an essential and unavoidable condition for guaranteeing respect for human and peoples' rights and for enforcing respect for international law, and undertakes to defend it by all legitimate means. This right is the source of all other rights and a cornerstone without which there can be no democracy, human rights or an international order that respects the dignity of peoples.

Main axes of recent diplomatic actions:

1. Activities at the continental and UN level

- **African Union:** The Saharawi Republic has consolidated its place in the African Union, actively participating in summits such as the BRICS summit in South Africa, the UAUE partnership summits, the climate conferences in Kenya and Ethiopia, the UACARICOM summit, the TICAD summits, as well as in all activities and meetings organized by the African Union or by the States maintaining diplomatic relations with it.
- **United Nations Security Council:** The year 2025 was marked by intense diplomatic battles over the renewal of MINURSO's mandate. Despite attempts by some permanent members of the Council to change the terminology enshrined in dealing with the question of Western Sahara, Resolution 2797

adopted in October 2025 reaffirmed that any realistic and agreed solution must lead to the exercise by the Saharawi people of their right to self-determination, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. It should be recalled that the Security Council adopted 15 resolutions between 2013 and 2025 without achieving tangible progress to end the Moroccan occupation, due to Morocco's intransigence and its refusal to respect international legality.

- **Regional agreements:** On 2 April 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Saharawi Republic and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in favour of decolonisation and self-determination.

2. State representation and diplomatic accreditations The diplomatic representation of the Saharawi Republic has expanded significantly in the years covered by the report, reflecting its growing political and diplomatic presence in the international arena, particularly in Africa, Latin America and Asia, where it has embassies accredited in 22 countries, as well as a permanent representation to the African Union. At the same time, the Polisario Front provides political and diplomatic representation in the majority of European countries, North America and Oceania, through more than 26 officially recognized or accepted offices and representations, working to maintain relations with governments, parliaments, civil society organizations and the media.

3. Political positions and increase in intensity

Rejection of the current process: The Polisario Front, which leads the government of the Saharawi Republic, has stated that it cannot be part of a political process based on proposals aimed at legitimizing the occupation. This position reflects the rejection of the Moroccan project of "autonomy" as the exclusive framework for negotiation, an attempt contrary to the basic principles of international law. At the same time, the Frente Polisario is cooperating constructively with the efforts of the United Nations to reach a peaceful, agreed solution that guarantees the Saharawi people the exercise of their right to self-determination, thus putting an end to five decades of colonisation and occupation.

Mobilization of international and popular support The Saharawi people's struggle for freedom enjoys the support of many influential states around the world, as well as considerable support from civil society and popular movements in the majority of countries. Conversely, the Moroccan occupation remains isolated in its attempt to impose a colonial fait accompli, supported by states themselves accused of violations of international law and involved in stirring up conflicts in Africa and elsewhere, first and foremost France.

Warning regarding economic activities: The Saharawi government has reiterated its warnings to international companies and organisations against any activity carried out in the Saharawi territories, described as an "open war zone". The Saharawi Republic has won all the legal actions brought by the Polisario Front before the European and African courts against Morocco and against the European States involved in the illegal exploitation of natural

resources, by means of contracts signed with the occupying power without the agreement of the Saharawi people or their legitimate representative.

D. Gender equality and women's rights (paragraphs 1316)

The Saharawi Republic has adopted a set of operational and legislative measures to enable Saharawi women to fully assume their role in State institutions and society. Women actively participate in all elections and electoral operations. **A Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Social Affairs** has been set up to develop public policies on women's rights.

In addition, the Saharawi Republic adopted an **official Declaration on Gender Equality** on 19 March 2022, with a follow-up mechanism through periodic reports to the African Union, the latest of which was on 15 April 2025. This approach reflects an institutional approach based on evaluation and monitoring.

In the same spirit, the Republic continues its efforts to achieve the objectives of gender equality through equal opportunities and the establishment of practical mechanisms for the participation of women in all spheres, without discrimination on the basis of sex. These efforts include:

- The opening of a **specialized school** for the training of women in various professional sectors.
- The creation of a **technical group for the support and strengthening of women's capacities**, composed of young specialists in psychology, sociology, law, health, economics and political science.

These initiatives aim to train, raise awareness and empower women, particularly in the economic field, in order to increase their level of independence and strengthen their role. This policy has led to the emergence of successful models of women entrepreneurs and active in economic sectors, sometimes surpassing men, as reflected in the statistical indicators for the year 2024 presented in the following table.

Representation of women in the different sectors (2024)

The sector	Percentage of female representation
Local and regional political affairs	100 %
Social Affairs and Advancement of Women	98 %
Health	92 %
Education	88 %
Commerce	72 %
Profession of lawyer	66 %
Water and Environment	63,23 %
Youth and sports	57,89 %
Interior and safety	47 %

E. Judicial reforms and prisoners' rights (paragraphs 1720)

Sahrawi legislation limits police custody to 72 hours. The State is making sustained efforts to reintegrate minors and has undertaken numerous judicial reforms in this area, which have been welcomed by society. The Saharawi Republic intends to continue these improvements.

F. Health, education and employment (paragraphs 2125)

The Saharawi Republic applies a policy of free health care, compulsory education and the creation of employment opportunities. These policies remain national priorities despite the constraints imposed by the occupation of part of the territory, which deprives thousands of Saharawis of their fundamental rights in these areas.

G. Protection of vulnerable groups and the environment (paragraphs 2632)

The Saharawi Republic is working to strengthen and adopt all initiatives in favour of persons with disabilities, the elderly and environmental protection.

H. Peace, security and culture (paragraphs 3336)

The Saharawi Republic and the Polisario Front have made considerable efforts to promote peace, security and culture, including through:

- Adherence to Geneva Call in 2005, banning the use of anti-personnel mines and committing to the destruction of their entire stockpile (20,493 mines), in eight phases, the last of which in 2018 with the destruction of 2,500 mines in the presence of international observers.
- The official declaration of the Polisario Front, on 23 June 2015, of accession to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and to Additional Protocol I relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, deposited with the Government of Switzerland in accordance with Article 96, paragraph 3, of Additional Protocol I of 1977. This approach enshrines the Polisario Front as a party committed to the respect of international humanitarian law, with the rights and obligations that flow from it, strengthening its legitimacy as a national liberation movement and confirming its commitment to protect civilians and respect the rules of humanitarian law in the context of national liberation conflicts and situations of foreign occupation.

4. Blocking factors (paragraphs 3742)

- **Moroccan occupation (paras. 37, 3940)**

The illegal occupation of Western Sahara since 1975 constitutes the main obstacle to the exercise of the rights of the Saharawi people, due to the systematic violations and illegal exploitation of natural resources. Several international reports, including that of the United Nations Office for Human Rights in 2006, have concluded that the

deprivation of the right to self-determination is the root cause of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural violations suffered by this people.

- **Landmines (paragraph 38)**

Mines scattered along the separation wall pose a daily threat to civilians and livestock. The Saharawi Republic has destroyed its entire stockpile in accordance with its Geneva Call commitments and is strengthening its cooperation with the Italian organization CISP and other specialized agencies to continue demining efforts.

- **Poverty and the situation of refugees (paragraphs 40-41)**

The Saharawi refugees, who have been living in south-west Algeria since 1975, constitute the oldest population of political refugees on the continent. They suffer from political and international uncertainties that affect humanitarian aid, which is sometimes used to reduce support and force them to give up their rights. In the occupied territories, poverty and unemployment are increasing among the Saharawis, while Morocco encourages the settlement of Moroccan settlers through various advantages, in a settlement policy aimed at changing the demographic reality, in contradiction with international law and humanitarian law.

- **Delay in the settlement of the conflict (paragraph 42)**

The Republic deplores the failure of the United Nations to organize direct negotiations between the parties, due to Morocco's repeated obstructions. It reiterates its call for an urgent solution under the aegis of the United Nations and the African Union, guaranteeing the exercise of the inalienable right of the Saharan people to self-determination, in accordance with Article 20 of the Charter and the relevant resolutions.

5. Areas of focus (paragraphs 43-51)

The Saharawi Republic undertakes to respond to all the concerns raised:

- **Follow-up to recommendations (paragraph 43):** This report details the actions taken since 2012.
- **Ratification of the instruments (paragraph 44):**
 - Protocol on Persons with Disabilities (23/06/2019).
 - Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons (23/06/2019).
 - Protocol on the Rights of Women (19/03/2022).
 - Deposit of the instrument on the rights of the child and their well-being (31/07/2024).
- **Access to the African Court (45):** Ongoing consideration of a declaration under Article 34(6) to allow direct access for individuals and organizations.
- **Death penalty (46):** Effective moratorium in force; consideration of legislative abolition.

- **Police custody (47):** Alignment planned for the maximum duration of 48 hours recommended.
- **Statistical data (4851):** Improved data collection on freedom of association, torture, reproductive health, etc., despite limited resources.

6. Recommendations (paras. 52 (ixiii))

Recommendation	Commitment of the Saharawi Republic
(i) Ratification des instruments	Priority given to ratifications
(ii) Declaration for the African Court	Draft legislation under consideration
(iii) Legislative abolition of the death penalty	Reflection in progress
(iv) Duration of police custody	48-hour alignment
(vvi) Vulnerable groups and the environment	Maintaining priority
(vii) Combating torture	Dissemination of the Robben Island Principles
(viii) Negotiations with Morocco	Continued efforts for self-determination
(ix) Cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner	Continuous cooperation
(x) Data and statistics	Inclusion in the next report
(xixii) Reporting Guidelines	Integration into future reports
(xiii) Follow-up on Recommendations	Regular notification to the Commission

The Saharawi Republic reaffirms its willingness to cooperate fully with the Commission and to make progress in the protection of human rights despite the persistent challenges, in particular the continued occupation of part of its territory. In return, it called on the Commission to fully assume its mandate and responsibilities towards the Saharawi Republic, as a State party to the Charter, and to strengthen cooperation with its institutions in order to improve the situation of Saharawi human rights.

PART III

DATA AND INFORMATION ON THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SAHARAWI ARAB DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The Saharawi Republic guarantees the implementation of a national plan to strengthen respect for the human rights enshrined in the Constitution. The Plan sets out a coherent human rights policy and confirms the determination of the Republic to promote the individual and collective freedoms and duties of its citizens, as well as the values of equality, solidarity, participation and tolerance.

In this context, the Government is continuing the reforms undertaken, including the completion of the reform of the judicial sector and the evaluation of measures in the areas of education, health and social protection. In addition, the status of women has been improved, especially since the 2015 General People's Congress, which was marked by increased participation of women in public life and society, with increased representation in institutions.

Human rights policy in the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic has led to a continuous strengthening of:

- **(A) the institutional architecture,**
- **(B) the legal framework.**

A. Institutional architecture

It includes:

1. Constitutional mechanisms

2. Non-Constitutional Mechanisms

1. Constitutional mechanisms

They are managed by political bodies and judicial institutions. The 1995 Constitution, amended in 2023, enshrines the separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers, within the framework of a presidential system.

- **Legislative power:** exercised by the Saharawi National Council (Articles 75 to 116 of the Constitution). As a sovereign body, it democratically expresses the will of the people, formulates and adopts laws, supervises State institutions, controls public finances, approves government programmes and evaluates their implementation.
 - Composed of 51 members elected by direct and secret suffrage.
 - Eligibility conditions: bea Sahrawi, at least 25 years old, have a clean criminal record, have a university degree or at least five years' professional experience.
 - The Council adopts the government's annual programme, the budget and ratifies international treaties.
 - It is headed by an elected president, assisted by a bureau, commissions and a general secretariat. Members enjoy parliamentary immunity.
 - It holds two ordinary sessions (spring and autumn) and can convene extraordinary sessions. Human rights issues are dealt with by its standing committees.
- **The Consultative Council:** an advisory body to the President of the Republic, whose composition and functioning are determined by presidential decree.
- **Executive power:** exercised by the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister.
 - The President, elected by direct and secret universal suffrage by the General People's Congress of the Polisario Front for a three-year term renewable once for a period of one year, embodies national unity and represents the State.
 - The Prime Minister implements the presidential programme, coordinates government action and submits the programme to the National Council for approval.
- **The Judiciary:** independent, composed of three levels of courts (first instance, appeal, Supreme Court), as well as military courts. Judgments are rendered in the name of the people, guaranteeing equality and respect for the law.
 - The Supreme Court, headed by a president appointed by the Head of State, is the top of the judicial hierarchy.

- The Prosecutor General, also appointed by the President, represents the Public Prosecutor's Office.
- The Supreme Council of the Judiciary, chaired by the Head of State and composed of seven members, ensures the independence of the judiciary, protects the rights of judges and issues opinions on pardons and reductions of sentences.
- The legal profession is free and independent, governed by law.
- **The Constitutional Council:** body responsible for:
 - To review the constitutionality of laws, regulations and international agreements.
 - Verify the legality of the elections.
 - To resolve disputes between institutions on the application of the Constitution.
 - Study and analyze the Constitution.
 - Composed of five members: a President appointed by the Head of State, two members elected by Parliament and two by the Supreme Council of the Judiciary. Its decisions are final, not subject to appeal and binding on all authorities after publication in the Official Journal.

2. Non-Constitutional Mechanisms

Non-constitutional mechanisms include institutions established to strengthen the enjoyment of human rights under sub-constitutional provisions. These mechanisms include bodies of an administrative or private nature.

The Saharawi National Commission for Human Rights (CONASADH): created by Presidential Decree No. 5/2014 of 8 March 2014, in accordance with the Paris Principles. It has 33 members representing institutions, civil society organisations and national personalities recognised for their commitment to human rights, including 16 women.

- An independent and advisory body responsible for monitoring and assessing the human rights situation, alerting on violations and making recommendations.
- It carries out awareness-raising, information and communication activities, issues opinions to improve national legislation and prepares an annual report on the human rights situation to the President of the Republic.

Freedom of opinion and expression is considered an essential instrument for the supervision and protection of human rights, acting as a check and balance.

B. Legal framework and concrete measures

The legal framework governing human rights in the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic includes the Constitution, international treaties, organic laws and ordinary legislation. The 1995 Constitution, amended in 2023, devotes its second chapter to rights and freedoms, established as constitutional principles, also enshrined in the international instruments to which the Republic is a party.

Chapter I of the second title sets out the rights and constitutional guarantees guaranteed to all Saharawi citizens, without distinction based on race, colour, sex, language, religion or opinion (Article 25). These rights include:

- Equality before the law (Article 26).
- Protection of individual freedoms: presumption of innocence, right to defence, prohibition of arbitrary arrests, limitation of police custody to 72 hours (Article 27).
- The inviolability of dignity and honour, the protection of the home unless authorized by a court (Article 28).
- The guarantee of freedom of expression (Article 30).

Chapter I also enshrines social and economic rights:

- Right to vote and to stand as a candidate (Article 33).
- Access to public office (Article 34).
- Guarantee of private property (Article 35).
- Compulsory and free education (Article 36).
- Health protection (Article 37).
- Work as a right and duty (Article 38).
- Support for vulnerable groups: mothers, children, disabled people and the elderly (Article 39).
- Right to housing and freedom of movement (Article 40).
- Rights of the families of martyrs, wounded and missing (Article 41).
- Promotion of the participation of women (Article 42) and young people (Article 43).
- Rights of legally resident aliens: freedom of worship and protection of property (Article 44 and 45).
- Support for the market economy, once national sovereignty has been fully restored (Article 46).

The second chapter deals with the obligations:

- Respect for the Constitution and the laws, without excuse of ignorance (Article 47).
- Defense of the fatherland, protection of national unity, severe punishment of treason and espionage (Article 48).
- Compulsory national service for eligible citizens (Article 49).
- Protection of the family: the duty of parents to educate their children, the duty of children to respect and obey their parents (Article 50).

This mechanism aims to balance rights and duties, guaranteeing social stability and progress towards independence and sovereignty.

The Saharawi Republic reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948), a commitment enshrined in the preamble to its Constitution. The Polisario Front acceded to the four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I on 24 June 2015, in accordance with Article 96 of the Protocol. The Sahrawi Republic also maintains close cooperation with the United Nations, international humanitarian organizations and NGOs.

The annual celebrations of Human Rights Day, Women's Day, Children's Day, Day of the African Child and Day of Persons with Disabilities provide opportunities for public policy advocacy and evaluation.

In the area of human rights education, primary schools incorporate international conventions into their curricula (civics, Islamic education, languages, history and geography). Educational materials (posters, extracts from conventions) are distributed in all national schools. The regional and international instruments ratified by the Republic are also relayed by the media, with specific programmes. Magistrates receive training, both internally and abroad, on civil liberties and human rights.

PART IV

IMPLEMENTATION BY THE SAHARAWI ARAB DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE AFRICAN CHARTER

- **Article 1: Application of the Charter** The ratification of the African Charter has given this instrument a supranational value, under the supervision of the Constitutional Council, and has made it a mandatory reference for the drafting of organic laws and decrees. Since 2010, the Saharawi Republic has been engaged in a process of bringing its legislation into line with African and international standards.
- **Articles 2 and 3: Non-discrimination and equality before the law**
The Sahrawi Republic guarantees the elimination of all forms of discrimination and equal rights for all citizens and residents.
 - **Constitutional provisions:**
 - **Article 25** : Every citizen shall enjoy rights and freedoms without discrimination as to race, colour, sex, religion or political opinion.
 - **Article 26** : Citizens are equal before the law in matters of protection and punishment.
 - **Articles 33 and 34** : They guarantee the right to vote and access to public office according to objective criteria.
 - **Legal provisions:**
 - **Penal Code** criminalizing racial, religious or sexual discrimination.
 - **Labour Code** prohibiting discrimination in employment and pay.
 - **Education and health laws** guaranteeing free and equal access.

The Sahrawi Republic has ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, thus reaffirming the principles of justice. It has also acceded to African and international human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution (in particular the second chapter, to which 21 articles are devoted).

International and regional commitments

A — Guarantees of equality in the judicial system

- Article 126 of the Constitution enshrines the principles of legality and equality before the law, while guaranteeing everyone the right to appeal to the courts.

B. Gender equality

- With regard to legal capacity, the age of civil majority is set at 18 years for marriage and the conclusion of contracts, in the same way for both sexes.
- In terms of financial rights, women have autonomy over property, the right to keep their family name and the freedom to manage their property without the intervention of their husbands.

C. Protection of women and their social position

- The absence of violence against women stems from the respected place they occupy in Saharawi society. To date, no cases of violence against women have been registered in court. This reality can be explained by the culture of the Saharawi people, which rejects violence, especially against women, children, the elderly and the vulnerable. It is also the result of the attachment of Saharawi society to these values, as well as of the action of the Republic to enshrine women's rights and to encourage them to exercise them.

D. Legal autonomy

- There are no discriminatory laws on property management or civil rights. This legal and institutional framework illustrates the commitment of the Saharawi State to protect human rights and consolidate the principles of justice and equality, in accordance with its constitutional and international obligations. The Republic reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principle of equality and the protection of the fundamental rights of all.

Article 4: Right to life and to physical and moral integrity

The Constitution of the Saharawi Republic explicitly guarantees the protection of the physical and moral integrity of individuals and respect for human dignity. Article 28 stipulates: *"The Stateshall ensure the inviolability of the human person. Any form of physical or moral violence, any violation of dignity, as well as any violation of the home shall be prohibited."*

Article 27 specifies the guarantees of individual freedom:

- Presumption of innocence until conviction by judicial decision.
- Right to defence and assistance of a lawyer.
- Prohibition of detention or imprisonment except in cases provided for by law.
- Limitation of police custody to 72 hours, with extension only by reasoned judicial decision.

The Penal Code devotes an entire chapter to crimes against the person (murder, battery, kidnapping), with severe punishments, regardless of race, sex, religion or status. It also criminalises moral offences such as defamation and threats. The Code of Criminal Procedure provides guarantees against any abuse in the application of judicial measures.

Articles 5 and 6: Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment – Right to personal security and prohibition of arbitrary detention

The Saharawi Republic, aware of the suffering inflicted by decades of colonial exploitation, is committed to putting an end to any practice of exploitation, humiliation or trafficking in persons. The Constitution guarantees the right to liberty, security of persons and property, and protection against threats, arbitrary arrest or detention. It also ensures the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time.

Article 28 formally prohibits any form of torture or violence: *"It is forbidden to attack the integrity of man, his honour or dignity, or to inflict torture or any physical or moral violence on him."*

The Code of Criminal Procedure provides for any person arrested:

- The right to contact one's family.
- The medical examination before the interrogation and after the police custody.
- The right to the assistance of a lawyer before the courts.
- The prohibition of extending police custody beyond 72 hours without a reasoned judicial decision.

As for the death penalty, it has never been applied in the Saharawi Republic. It remains provided only in cases of premeditated murder, when the victim's family refuses any reconciliation or compensation.

Article 7: Right to a fair trial

The Saharawi Republic guarantees simple and fair access to justice:

- Simplified judicial administration, organised on two levels.
- Distribution of jurisdictions adapted to bring justice closer to citizens.
- A legal aid system that allows access to justice regardless of economic or social status.

Article 8: Freedom of thought, conscience and worship

The Saharawi Republic guarantees freedom of worship, with respect for the Constitution, laws and regulations, public order, morality and the fundamental rights of others.

Article 9: Right to information and freedom of expression

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the right to information. The Information Act has been elevated to the status of an organic law, reflecting the importance attached to freedom of the press.

Media policy is based on constitutional principles inspired by international instruments:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ratified in 1986).

Media Policy Objectives:

- Promote freedom of expression and the right of access to information.
- To support the causes of human rights and self-determination.
- To contribute to development and liberation through honest and impartial information.

Achievements despite the challenges of war and exile:

- Diversification of the media (press agency, television, radio, newspapers, websites).
- Development of infrastructure (fibre optics, satellite broadcasting, internet).
- Emergence of independent media (electronic newspapers, blogs, websites).

Main official media:

- National television (SADR TV) broadcasts via ABS 34 and Comsat satellites, in order to cover Africa, Latin America and Europe
- Radios:
 - National Radio (12 hours daily in Arabic and Spanish).
 - Regional radio stations (5 FM stations), including a youth (Laayoune) and a women's (Smara) station.
- Written press:
 - Newspapers: *Sahara Libre* (weekly), *Akhbar Al-Yawm* (daily).
 - Magazines: *El-Khanka*, *AlAmal*, *Al-Ittihad* (monthly).
- Websites: Sahrawi News Agency, government portals.

Technological developments and media openness:

- Live streaming of official media on the internet for Saharawis in the occupied territories and the diaspora.
- Use of social media to expand the audience.
- Introduction of foreign languages (French, Spanish, English, Russian) in some official programs and websites.

Training and legal framework:

- Basiri Institute of Journalism (founded in 2011), offering theoretical and practical training in partnership with international universities.
- Internal law guaranteeing the rights of media professionals (fair employment, promotions, social protection).
- Support for the families of the journalist victims: monthly allowances, annual recognition ceremonies.

Women's participation in the media:

- Women represent 33.99% of professionals in the sector.
- Their proportion reached 62.85% in regional radio stations.
- They hold management positions (radio directors, editors-in-chief).

Main Programs

- **Social and cultural programmes:** represent 64% of the programme schedule.
- **Human rights programmes:** dedicated to denouncing the violations committed by the Moroccan occupation in the occupied territories and educating citizens about their human rights.
- **International cooperation:** working with organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations to raise awareness of humanitarian issues through training and awareness-raising programs.

Challenges: Despite the gains, the Saharawi media system continues to face major challenges, including the impact of the resumption of war and the violation of the ceasefire since November 2020 on media services in liberated areas, as well as the media blockade imposed by the Moroccan occupation in the occupied territories.

Conclusion: the Saharawi Republic has succeeded in building an integrated media system, contributing to the defence of the national cause, the promotion of human rights and openness

to the international environment, based on media pluralism, technological modernization, continuous training and the protection of press freedom.

Articles 10 and 11: Freedom of association and assembly

Article 31 of the Constitution guarantees the right to establish political parties and associations, which will be fully recognized after the completion of independence. Article 32 stipulates that, until the achievement of national sovereignty, the Frente Polisario shall remain the political and liberating framework within which the Saharawis express their legitimate aspirations for self-determination, independence and national unity.

At the same time, many civil society organizations are active in the fields of youth, women, workers, lawyers, the disappeared, detainees, sports, culture, the environment, journalism, mine action and human rights. These organizations operate freely on the ground.

Article 12: Freedom of movement, the right to asylum and the prohibition of collective expulsions

The Constitution guarantees all Saharawi citizens freedom of movement and residence in the national territory, as well as the right to enter and leave it.

Article 13: Right to participate in the management of public affairs and access to public services

The Constitution guarantees the participation of citizens in the management of the country's public affairs through the relevant principles and procedures, through several provisions, including the following articles:

- Article 8: *"The people are the source of all power; national sovereignty belongs exclusively to the people."*
- Article 9: *"The constituent power belongs to the people, who exercise their sovereignty through the institutions they establish."*

Articles 33 and 34 guarantee the right to vote and to stand for election, as well as access to public office according to objective criteria.

Constitutional equality:

- Article 26: Complete equality between men and women in rights and duties.
- Article 42: Guarantee of women's political, economic and social participation.

Electoral framework and civil service:

- Electoral law amended in 2009: abolition of all discrimination, equality of opportunity.

- Article 10: right to vote from the age of 18.
- Civil Service Act (2010): equality, merit and competence in recruitment.

Women's political participation:

- **Parliament (National Council):** Women make up 42% of the members (21 out of 51 seats), an increase of 9% in the 2023 elections.
- **Municipal councils (2021):** 90% of mayoral positions held by women.
- **Government:** 2 out of 17 women ministers (cooperation, social affairs and advancement of women).
- **Constitutional Council:** 1 woman out of 5 members (first female represented).
- **Pan-African Parliament:** 2 out of 5 women representing Saharawis.
- **Justice:** integration of women as magistrates, lawyers and clerks.
- **Children's Parliament:** 51 members, including 25 girls, to inculcate the culture of equality from the youngest age.

Mechanisms to promote participation:

- **Awareness-raising campaigns** on the role of women in governance.
- **Legislative reforms:** the amendment of laws to ensure fairness (e.g. electoral law).
- Targeted professional training (magistrates, lawyers).

Article 14: Right of ownership

The Constitution provides that "private property is guaranteed", the fundamental Saharawi text thus ensuring citizens the right to property through the provisions of Article 35: private property is recognized and governed by a law that the government is working to prepare for submission to Parliament during its next legislative session. This law will provide an equitable framework for public and private property. In addition, the Constitution also guarantees aliens residing in the country the protection of their property, in accordance with article 45, which stipulates: The State shall ensure the protection of the rights and private property of every alien lawfully residing in the national territory.

Article 15: Right to work under just and satisfactory conditions

Labour and social security legislation is in line with the principles of the African Charter. Article 38 of the Constitution states: *"Work is a right, a duty and an honour for every citizen."*

Despite the constraints of occupation and limited resources, the Saharawi Republic has put in place policies for job creation:

- **Production units:** Family farms, pilot farms, cooperatives.
- **Training centres:** To train Sahrawi managers and develop their skills.
- **Public employment:** Recruitment in administrations and institutions.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Encouragement of individual initiatives and small businesses.

Thus, despite all the difficulties, the Saharawi State has managed to strengthen employment opportunities and support the local economy, reflecting its firm desire to ensure dignified living conditions for its citizens.

In the same vein, and in order to take charge of the employment and training sectors, the Saharawi Republic established in 2007 a Ministry of the Civil Service, which is responsible for drawing up plans, programmes and legislation relating to the creation of jobs and the provision of training for citizens at all levels and in the various fields of specialization.

Constitutional principles:

- The constitutional principles governing labour legislation are based on the principle of non-discrimination among citizens.
- The 1995 Constitution, amended in 2023, guarantees the equality of citizens before the law, without any discrimination based on colour, ethnic origin, sex, opinion or any other personal or social status.
- The Constitution enshrines the fundamental principles of the promotion of human and civil rights, which constitute a reference for the development of labour law.
- Public institutions proscribed feudal, regionalist and clientelist practices.

Fundamental rights of workers:

- Right to work.
- Right to protection, safety and hygiene.
- Right to rest.
- Right to trade union organization.
- Right to strike.

National legislation:

The Basic Law guarantees workers' rights, including;

- Trade union rights.

- Conventions collectives.
- Participation in employers' associations.
- Social security and retirement.
- Occupational health and safety.
- Right to rest.
- Participation in the prevention and resolution of collective disputes.
- Right to strike.

Protection of specific categories

- **Women:** enjoy the same rights and duties as men, with special provisions such as maternity leave and specific rules for night work.
- **Children:** prohibition of work by minors under 16 years of age, except for exceptions provided for in the context of vocational training.
- **Persons with disabilities:** the constitutional terminology has been changed to "persons with special needs". They have full rights, with special centres for special education, autonomy and integration, including teaching in Braille. Persons with cerebral palsy and the elderly are given special attention, followed by a central directorate within the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Advancement of Women. Social workers provide permanent support, and the Republic encourages their employment in appropriate functions.

Penalties: violations of labour legislation are punishable by fines or prison sentences, in particular for:

- Employment of minors under the legal age.
- Discrimination in working conditions.

Article 16: Right to the enjoyment of the highest standard of physical and mental health

The Constitution enshrines free health care (Article 37): *"Medical care and treatment are a right for every citizen. The State shall ensure the prevention and control of diseases and epidemics."*

The health sector is a national priority, ensuring access to services and building a healthy society. The Saharawi Republic has adopted a **national public health strategy** aimed at:

- Preserve and develop available resources (infrastructure, human resources, specialized skills).

- Promote prevention through health awareness and monitoring programs.
- Provide medical equipment and materials to improve services.
- Continue to implement WHO's plans against epidemics and infectious diseases.
- Maintain joint programmes with Médecins du Monde, the Spanish Cooperation Agency and UNHCR.

Achievements of the past decade:

The last decade has been a particularly important stage in the evolution of the organisational structure of the health sector, encompassing structures, training and cooperation, in particular:

- the use of specialized medical and surgical missions;
- the provision of medicines and medical equipment;
- obtaining funding from health projects;
- the rehabilitation and construction of hospitals and new health units in the camps and liberated territories.

As part of this dynamic, specialized programs have been integrated into the health system, including:

- the fight against malnutrition and anaemia;
- the development of programmes for the prevention and control of communicable diseases, epidemics and pandemics;
- awareness-raising and prevention programmes focusing on hygiene in all its forms, with the adoption of a "health weeks" plan;
- advanced maternal and child protection programmes;
- specific programmes for the care of people with chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, epilepsy, celiac disease and other chronic diseases;
- state-of-the-art programmes for the manufacture and assembly of prosthetics for war and mine victims;
- convalescent programmes, including the establishment of specialised centres with rich diets and quality health care, benefiting patients in the recovery phase, all categories and ages, including the elderly, children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers.

Available health facilities:

Thanks to the efforts made in the area of health infrastructure, the Saharawi Republic has:

- 3 national hospitals and 5 dispensaries in the liberated areas.
- 2 national hospitals, 5 regional hospitals and 30 multi-purpose clinics in the refugee camps.

- 2 specialized centers (pulmonary tuberculosis, psychiatric diseases).
- Health training schools: paramedical school for nurses and midwives, school for care assistants, veterinary school.
- National laboratory for the production of medicines, centre specialising in gynaecology and obstetrics, medical analysis laboratory, disinfectant products factory, prosthesis workshops.
- And particularly during the summer season, when temperatures can reach 50 °C in July and August, the National Hospital Center has been expanded, with a strengthening of the gastrointestinal diseases department as well as the creation of a department dedicated to surgical interventions in several specialties, such as ophthalmology, otolaryngology, and orthopedic surgery.

Major national health programmes have been launched, including those related to the control of endemic and epidemic diseases and the promotion of maternal and child health. These initiatives have led to a significant improvement in the concrete results in terms of access to health care for people in rural areas, as evidenced by the national indicators recorded in recent years, in particular the evolution of infant and maternal mortality rates. Some of the most notable health programs include:

National Health Programmes:

1. National immunization program.
2. Maternal Health Program.
3. Child Health Program.
4. Chronic Disease Monitoring Program.
5. Specific program for celiac disease.
6. The permanent programming of medical missions — Algerian, Spanish, Italian and French — covering various specialties, has made it possible to perform surgical interventions for complex cases, particularly in ophthalmology, nephrology, urology, obstetrics, general surgery, otorhinolaryngology and in the treatment of chronic diseases.
7. Continuing education program.
8. Veterinary and animal health program.
9. The school health programme, which monitors the health of children during their schooling, is part of the health policies and programmes implemented by the Saharawi State.

In the field of prevention

1. Reproductive Health Program:

Prenatal follow-up of pregnant women is provided through a specific protocol, providing for the care of patients in each dispensary, post or health centre by specialized midwives, with an average of four consultations per woman during pregnancy, as well as a postnatal visit within forty days of delivery. Adequate and comfortable midwifery coverage is guaranteed in all regional hospitals and health centres, with the necessary vaccines available for some pregnant women.

Continuous awareness-raising work is carried out among women of childbearing age. Nutritional support is provided to pregnant and breastfeeding women through the distribution of a monthly voucher worth DZD 2,600, in addition to general coverage of midwives in all clinics.

The means and equipment essential for the monitoring of pregnant women are provided. Maternity wards are open and equipped with all the necessary equipment in regional hospitals and health centres, as well as in some dispensaries. Continuing education is provided at the Paramedical Training School and in its section of the wilaya of Dakhla, in the training of midwives, with incentives to promote adherence to training.

Specific health programs

2. Integrated Child Health Program

- Application of a follow-up protocol for children aged zero to five years allowing for the early detection of certain conditions, such as stunting, dwarfism, malnutrition and anaemia.
- Classification and referral of cases requiring the intervention of medical specialists.
- Implementation of WHO maternal and child health policies, in line with strategic indicators.
- Guarantee and monitoring of the vaccination of children according to the national calendar.
- Vaccination coverage targets achieved through increased citizen awareness.
- Existence of qualified vaccination teams in all regional health directorates.
- Regular training and training for staff responsible for vaccination.
- Establishment of cold chains for the storage of vaccines.
- Distribution of nutritional supplements and the organization of food awareness workshops for children.

3. School Health Program

- Enhanced coordination between school health workers and regional and local directorates.
- Full health coverage of all schools.
- Continuous medical monitoring of students, including in Koranic schools and social institutions.
- Creation of medical records for school children.
- Continuation of multidisciplinary medical missions, with a focus on mental health.

4. Celiac Disease (Gluten Intolerance) Program

- Diagnosis and follow-up of cases.
- Family awareness programs.
- Coordination to provide adequate feeding and regular distribution.
- Patient registries updated.

5. Programme to combat epidemics and pandemics

Despite the significant lack of capacity for early detection of epidemics and pandemics, the programme has been able to provide:

- Continuous coordination with neighbouring countries in the event of disease outbreaks.
- The creation of a border centre for the screening and monitoring of travellers.
- Regional and cross-border surveillance of epidemics.
- The use of the *DATA GO platform* for the monitoring and management of pandemics.

Medical care

1. General Medicine

- Stable coverage in regional hospitals and local clinics.
- A regular operation of the "Chahid Bachir Salah" health complex.
- A contribution from foreign medical missions, particularly in surgery.

2. Nursing

- Continued coverage of primary care despite understaffing.
- Annual reinforcement by new graduates of the paramedical school.

- Stability of medical services in health establishments.

3. Specialized Medical Services

Despite the obvious disparities in the functioning of medical services within regional hospitals, which are sometimes affected by the breakdown of certain equipment or by the absence of specialists, the action of these departments has nevertheless made it possible to:

- Comprehensive care for patients suffering from ocular pathologies, from the initial examination to the performance of surgical procedures, with the provision of the necessary means of transport and accommodation.
- The care of people with disabilities, war victims, mines and traffic accidents is provided by the Centre for Functional Rehabilitation and Orthopaedics, through physiotherapy, specialised consultations and the fitting of prostheses

4. Mental Health

Despite the worrying shortage of mental health and psychiatric specialists, the difficulties in accessing psychotropic medications, as well as the inadequacy of the site of the Centre for Psychiatric Illnesses and its distance from hospitals, the Mental Health Program nevertheless makes it possible to:

- Case follow-up.
- Screening for psychological disorders in schools.
- Training for mental health staff.
- Coverage provided in regional hospitals and specialized centers.
- Awareness and ongoing psychological support.

5. Chronic Diseases

Given the lack of an exhaustive system for the management of the various chronic diseases and the limitation of the department's work to the most widespread ailments, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, the following is carried out:

- Follow-up and classification of cases (diabetes, hypertension, etc.).
- Regular supply of medicines.
- Awareness of chronic disease management.
- Immediate reporting in the event of a supply disruption.

Communication and health awareness

- Weekly health awareness sessions with doctors, specialists and officials, broadcast by the official media.
- Implementation of health programmes in the field of community health at regional and local levels.
- Regular transmission of health activities and news to the official media.
- Continuous publication of health activities on the official website of the Ministry of Public Health and on its social media accounts.
- Permanent coordination with mass organizations and components of civil society with a view to their involvement in awareness-raising and information programs.
- Periodic organization of global awareness campaigns on various health themes.
- Work according to the joint plan with the Ministry of Information.
- Organization of training in the field of communication in order to ensure the dissemination and transmission of the health message.
- Coordination with relevant national bodies and institutions on the various awareness-raising themes

Health statistics and indicators

The **health information system** collects and analyzes data from health services, making it possible to produce reliable indicators for decision-making and strategy development.

Achievements:

- Implementation of **the DHIS2** server in regional hospitals, improving data collection and analysis.
- Strengthening surveillance of notifiable diseases.
- Ongoing training of staff for screening and reporting.
- Field studies on the quality of care in refugee camps.
- Active participation in African Union workshops.
- Continued digitization of the health information system.
- Improved data reliability and availability.

Indicators of medical consultations 2019-2024

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	UNHCR Ref.
Annual rate of consultations per person	1	1	1	1	1,5	1	1–4
Consultations per person carried out by medical staff (general practitioner or specialist)	48 %	46 %	49 %	56,5 %	40,3 %	48,4 %	—
Consultations per person by nurses (nurses or midwives)	52 %	54 %	51 %	43,6 %	59,7 %	51,6 %	—

Reproductive Health Indicators (2024-2029)

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	UNHCR Ref.
Births attended by skilled personnel (% of deliveries)	87,2 %	92 %	94 %	96 %	96,35 %	95 %	100 %
Deliveries in health centres (% of deliveries)	83 %	89 %	94 %	94,18 %	94,18 %	95 %	100 %
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	250	201	132	110	79	60	<70 as a goal
Caesarean sections (% of deliveries)	9 %	10 %	11 %	14,91 %	10,79 %	15 %	10–15 %
Low birth weight (<2,500 g)	12 %	5 %	7,4 %	4,83 %	4,83 %	4 %	<15 %
Early prenatal follow-up (before 12 weeks)	19 %	21 %	31 %	33,84 %	33,84 %	35 %	100 %
Prenatal follow-up (at least 4 visits)	42 %	30 %	78 %	70,13 %	70,13 %	75 %	100 %

Indicators of malnutrition and anaemia in pregnant women (2019-2024)

Indicator – % of women in the Program	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Malnutrition in pregnant women (% BP< 23 cm)	17 %	34 %	43,4 %	29 %	30,3 %	41 %
Total anaemia in pregnant women (%)	77 %	78 %	89,2 %	71 %	73,9 %	79 %
Severe anaemia in pregnant women (%)	14 %	18 %	14,4 %	13,35 %	12,19 %	16 %

Indicators of malnutrition and anaemia in children (2019-2024)

Indicator – % of children under 5 years of age	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Moderate acute malnutrition (% children < 5 years)	6 %	6,8 %	9,9 %	9,2 %	5,83 %	11,92 %
Severe acute malnutrition (% children < 5 years)	0,36 %	2,9 %	0,5 %	0,3 %	0,6 %	1,04 %
Anaemia in children (% children < 5 years)	46,4 %	48,6 %	54 %	55,1 %	54,9 %	57 %

Infant mortality rate

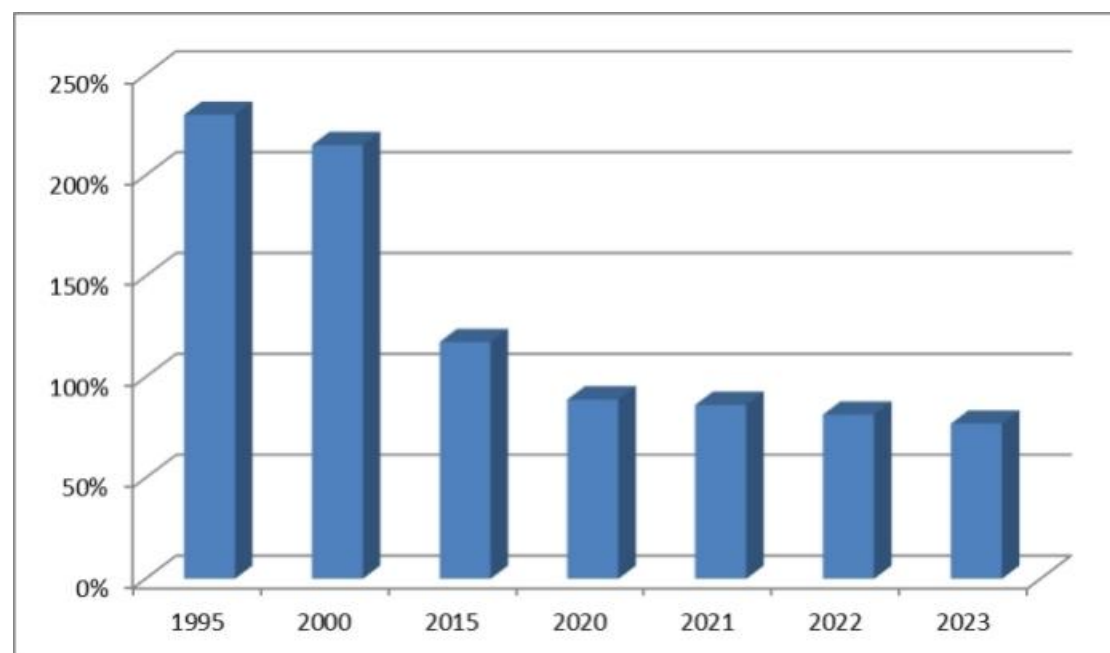
Year	Infant mortality rate (per 1000)
1990	57,8 ‰
2000	36,9 ‰
2005	37,5 ‰
2010	34,7 ‰
2015	32,5 ‰
2016	30,4 ‰
2017	30,4 ‰
2018	26,9 ‰
2019	26,2 ‰
2020	25,5 ‰
2021	24,8 ‰
2022	23,7 ‰
2023	23,1 ‰
2024	22,1 ‰

The table on infant mortality shows that the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic has succeeded in reducing severe forms of diseases and their complications on children's health, in particular deaths related to these diseases. This has required the implementation of extensive immunization programmes to eradicate polio, measles, diphtheria and neonatal tetanus. The immunization coverage rate for all vaccines has reached 88 per cent, with 98 per cent for BCG, 96 per cent for DTCP, 92 per cent for measles vaccine and 82 per cent for hepatitis B vaccination, introduced like other vaccines in 2003.

Trends in maternal mortality (MMR) – per 100,000 live births

With regard to maternal health, it is possible to see an acceleration of the estimated progress in the area of perinatal health, in particular the programme planned for the year 2024 and its expected results, which are expected to reduce perinatal mortality by 30% and maternal mortality by 50%.

Year	Rate (per 100,000 births)
1995	230
2000	215
2015	117,4
2020	88,9
2021	86,2
2022	81,4
2023	76,9



In 2023, the maternal mortality ratio was estimated at **76.9 per 100,000** (with an annual decrease rate of 5.5%), compared to **230 per 100,000 in 1995** and **117 per 100,000 in 2015**. Considerable efforts have been made in the area of coverage in gynaecology and obstetrics and paediatrics (with an increase of three specialist doctors per year since 2017), accompanied by a more balanced distribution. The goal is to achieve a maternal mortality ratio of no more than **18 deaths per 100,000 by 2025**, which requires improving the quality of obstetric care and expanding infrastructure coverage.

This has led to the implementation of particularly notable projects, including the development of specialized programmes for mothers and the recruitment of obstetrician-gynaecologists in

accordance with the human resources management plan, which has led to a significant improvement in women's health coverage in terms of antenatal care. This is reflected in the rate of antenatal consultations, which reached **90.2%**, the vaccination coverage of women against tetanus, and especially the rate of assisted deliveries, which reached **97.9% in 2023**.

With regard to mental health and service to citizens, and in accordance with international recommendations, including those of the World Health Organization, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic began in 1995 to establish intermediate mental health centres as part of essential services in order to improve access to intermediate-level mental health care. Currently, six regional treatment offices and a national drug control centre are operational.

Social protection and solidarity system

1. Coverage and social insurance

- Inlusiveness: covers all social categories (civil servants, self-employed, students, people with special needs, trainees, beneficiaries of social safety nets).
- Coverage rate: **97% of the population** (including ascendants, descendants, spouses and beneficiaries).
- Guaranteed access to care for people not covered by health insurance.

2. The main areas of social insurance

They cover **5 essential risks**:

1. **Sickness**: comprehensive coverage for all citizens.
2. **Maternity**: 100% full coverage and daily cash allowance equivalent to 100% of the daily wage.
3. **Disability**: financial support for people with permanent or temporary disabilities.
4. **Death**: pensions for survivors (spouse, orphans, ascendants).
5. **Unemployment**: support benefits for people who are unable to work.

3. Pension system

- Ensures a fair income for retirees and their families.

4. Additional Benefits

- Coverage for occupational diseases and accidents.
- Extended protection for vulnerable groups (people with special needs, interns, etc.).

ConclusionThe Saharawi social protection system is one of the most comprehensive in the region:

- ✓ Coverage of 97% of the population.
- ✓ Protection against the main social risks (sickness, maternity, invalidity, death, unemployment).
- ✓ Guarantee of a fair retirement.
- ✓ Enhanced support for vulnerable groups.

This system illustrates the State's commitment to ensuring social protection for all, despite economic and political challenges.

Article 17: The right to education and the right to participate in the cultural life of society

The Sahrawi Arab Republic has enshrined the right to education through the basic texts adopted, which guarantee free care for all children in the exercise of this right. Article 36 of the Constitution stipulates: *"The State shall organize compulsory and free education and the education system as a whole, in accordance with the laws and regulations in force."* Article 53 states that *"the right to education is guaranteed. Education shall be free under the conditions laid down by law,"* and primary education shall be declared compulsory.

This vital sector of national life has undergone a new dynamic following the adoption of amendments to the Law on School Legislation in 2005, which introduced a set of reforms aimed at promoting the functioning of the education and pedagogical system in order to meet the objectives of the educational policy of the Saharawi State, based on:

- The continued implementation of the national strategy for compulsory and free education at all levels, by creating favourable conditions to ensure the schooling of all children of school age, both inside and outside the country, and by facilitating school supervision. The government is pursuing its policy of ensuring education at all levels (as mentioned in the initial report of the Sahrawi Republic at the 33rd session of the ACHPR).
- The Government of the Saharawi Republic pays particular attention to the education sector, which is considered a priority, particularly in the preparation of the national budget, 20 per cent of which is devoted to education. In addition, the laws on national education policy reinforce this orientation, particularly in the area of vocational training and the comprehensive reform of the education sector, which affirms the compulsory nature of education for all girls and boys. The Sahrawi Arab Republic considers that the ability of every citizen to obtain a recognized professional qualification is a permanent national objective. The State guarantees equal opportunities in access to public education services.

In principle, failure by parents or legal guardians to comply with this obligation leads to criminal sanctions against them, thus constituting a means of ensuring universal education. It

should be noted that arrangements have been made to ensure the care of children with special needs, in cooperation with the sectors concerned.

The reform of the education system has resulted in important pedagogical innovations, including the introduction of new curricula and textbooks based on the competency-based approach. It has also integrated new educational dimensions, such as citizenship education, the promotion of a culture of human rights and awareness of environmental protection.

All these measures are essentially aimed at instilling in students values and behaviours such as understanding, tolerance, respect for others and the preserved environment. They also aim to teach life skills and modern scientific and technical knowledge, including information and communication technologies.

A considerable effort has been made to support education, in particular through the free distribution of textbooks to all pupils, and the guarantee of free school feeding for all enrolled. In addition, primary school students do not need school transport due to the proximity of the schools, while transport is provided for middle and secondary school students, as well as for students studying at universities abroad.

In addition to these efforts, in addition to school health coverage, the Saharawi State ensures that every student enrolled in disadvantaged and rural areas, as well as disabled and orphaned children, receives additional support. In addition, a national literacy strategy has been put in place to eradicate illiteracy, a goal achieved since 2016.

With regard to the continuation of efforts in the area of the right to education, the Saharawi Republic, after half a century of work, has managed to meet the growing demand for enrolment, as evidenced by the continuous increase in the number of pupils at all levels since 1976, the year in which compulsory and free education was introduced. It has thus been able to guarantee access to the primary, middle, secondary and university cycles for all children. The school enrolment rate for six-year-olds has increased from 93.55% in 1986 to 99.21% in 2024.

This development reflects the efforts made by the Saharawi State through a vast infrastructure development programme and the increased recruitment of qualified personnel, which has made it possible to improve the quality of the educational service, to increase the ratio of pupils and to considerably reduce the drop-out rate in the compulsory cycle.

In parallel with this government strategy, significant efforts have also been made within the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Thus, a legal arsenal has been put in place to establish a solid basis for the technical committees responsible for preparing the working platforms for the implementation of the programmes developed jointly with the countries of the continent, in particular the joint programmes with Algeria and South Africa within the framework of the African Union, as well as with Cuba and Venezuela at the bilateral level. This illustrates the strength and importance of cooperation among the states of the continent and with other countries. This cooperation in the school curriculum has led to significant progress, reflected in the results achieved by the national education system and in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

In the field of vocational training, several measures have been introduced to ensure better care for this educational sector. In accordance with the recommendations of the national education and training reform system, a new structure of the post-compulsory cycle has been put in place around three sectors:

- General and technical secondary education;
- Vocational education;
- Vocational training.

The new guidance system for these three sectors aims to support pupils in their educational choices and decisions, through the establishment of an information and guidance system based on the following measures:

- Creation, in each vocational training establishment, of a reception, information and guidance office under the supervision of a guidance counsellor;
- Development of information and communication support tools and systems;
- Consultation with the various sectors related to youth, in particular the national education sector.

Thus, information and communication play a crucial role, allowing potential candidates to make informed decisions and choose between the different programs offered. In addition, the State has set up a dual vocational training programme. This mode of teaching has many advantages, such as reducing costs for the State and better adapting to the needs of partnerships, while guaranteeing a professional environment.

The conclusions of studies on the future of diplomas of this type have shown that alternance vocational training offers better employment prospects, because of the reciprocal knowledge of the candidate's level of qualification and the professional environment to which he or she is oriented. In other words, there is a training programme for certain categories of citizens whose care is one of the sovereign missions of the Saharawi education system.

In addition, education and training programmes have been designed for young people who have not reached the required level of education, in order to improve their skills. At the end of the training, these young people are integrated into specialized fields according to the results obtained. If they pass the exams, they are awarded diplomas in the same way as other trainees.

Regarding people with disabilities, in addition to their reception in vocational training institutions, the Sahrawi Republic has five specialized regional centers.

In order to strengthen the protection of young people exposed to moral threats or persons placed in rehabilitation centres, the authorities have initiated vocational training programmes in these centres, as well as in reception facilities and guidance and education services in an open environment.

It should also be stressed that lifelong learning, designed for workers, remains one of the pillars of vocational training. The development and strengthening of human resources is an essential task of the public authorities, including the establishment of relations with partners in the main sectors of activity, in order to consolidate the education system, ensure the participation of economic actors and promote training programmes adapted to demand and promoting social integration.

Participation of every citizen in cultural life

A legislative and regulatory framework has been established with the following objectives:

- To combat regional disparities in terms of access to cultural practices;
- Introduce an incentive policy for cultural activities, by granting subsidies to men and women working in the creative industry, without any discrimination.

Cultural development

In the area of cultural development, a plan has been adopted to preserve the national identity, which is the bearer of patriotic and ethical values that constitute a bulwark against negative external influences. To this end, the Ministry of Culture has mobilized human and financial resources to strengthen and implement cultural programs for society, proposed by cultural associations. These programmes cover all cultural, scientific and artistic disciplines.

Actions taken include:

- The development of a cultural plan for the safeguarding of national identity;
- The animation of cultural structures and cooperation with communities and research centres specialising in oral heritage at the international level, as well as the continuation of various publications;
- The maintenance of cultural festivals and programmes, which are essential for the preservation of the foundations of the Saharawi identity and the creation of spaces for intergenerational dialogue, while strengthening international solidarity with the Saharawi people;
- The attention paid to the actors of the cultural sector in all its components, considered as bearers of a sacred mission and defenders of it, as well as the enhancement of national skills in the fields of theatre, cinema and visual arts.

Activities and cultural development

In accordance with the executive directives of the Saharawi Ministry of Culture, the conditions and modalities for the organization of cultural festivals have been defined. The Ministry has thus instituted international, national and local festivals distributed as follows:

- 2 international cultural festivals;
- 2 national cultural festivals;

- 27 local cultural festivals.

These activities aim to establish a real national cultural policy at the service of citizens, covering the entire territory through the generalization of cultural practice. They encompass all disciplines and allow artists to produce regularly, while promoting the emergence of young talent. This initiative has had a concrete impact on all artistic disciplines, regardless of region or language, as evidenced by:

- Cinema: annual international festival "*Fi Sahara*".
- Theatre: festival bringing together professionals, experimenters and amateurs;
- Arts: annual international festival;
- Music: traditional and popular festivals held in conjunction with national events;
- Poetry: 7 festivals.
- Visual arts: 3 festivals.
- Visual arts: 2 festivals.

Youth, Sport and Citizenship

With regard to sports and recreational activities for young people, the Saharawi Republic is working to complete and perfect its social project, which guarantees a dignified and decent life for its citizens. In particular, it is a question of ensuring the full participation of young people in the efforts and fruits of development, as well as their involvement in the decision-making process at all levels. This is achieved by providing the necessary resources, opportunities and support to enable them to take part in decisions on issues that affect and affect them, on the one hand, and to involve them in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policies on the other.

In this context, a national youth policy was adopted at the Council of Ministers in May 2008. It is based on mechanisms and programmes to promote the interests of young people in all areas of activity, in order to direct their energies in a constructive manner. This approach paves the way for young people's personal development, ensures their empowerment and prepares them for professional life.

The proactive policy of the Saharawi youth draws its foundations, orientations and means of implementation from the government. It is expressed through a short-, medium- and long-term government action plan for the execution, monitoring and evaluation of the interministerial policy in favour of youth, including various sectoral plans. The objective is to guarantee equal opportunities for all categories of young people throughout the national territory.

Six strategic objectives have been defined:

- To ensure the education, training and work-study programmes of young people;
- Promote the employment and professional integration of young people;

- Promote the integration of young people into the social environment;
- Strengthen the fight against social scourges and abuses;
- Ensure the synchronization and coordination of sectoral activities;
- To ensure effective care and to meet the needs and expectations of young people.

The Saharawi government is implementing policies aimed at, inter alia:

- Fight against youth unemployment and idleness, in particular by strengthening the network of institutions dedicated to youth. ;
- Combat all forms of anti-social behaviour;
- Promote knowledge exchange programmes among young people;
- Modernise and make youth institutions attractive;
- Encourage women's activities in structures dedicated to youth;
- Contribute to the fight against drug addiction;
- Strengthen partnerships with youth associations and movements;
- To develop information and communication among young people;
- To promote the social and educational development of young people.

Sports sector

Priority actions include:

- Improving the governance of the sport system;
- Reforming financing and control;
- Develop the network of sports infrastructure, both at national and local level;
- To develop human resources;
- Promote sports medicine and research in sports science and technology;
- Strengthen the principle of sport for all;
- To develop physical education and school sport;
- Promoting sports ethics and combating violence in sport.

The Sahrawi Republic has youth and sports infrastructures equipped with all operational amenities, distributed equitably throughout the territory. Measures have been taken to facilitate access to this equipment, including:

- Free recreational activities open to young people;

- Generalization of the practice of sport, including for women and people with disabilities;
- Generalization of sports practice in schools;
- Free access to the Internet and information and communication technologies;
- Promotion and development of tourism for young people.

Social Development and Citizenship

Many youth activities are organized every year in various areas of development and creativity, through exchanges and discoveries in all regions. In order to strengthen civic spirit, young people also participate in national and international commemoration programmes.

It should be recalled that, since the recommendations of the Conference of African Ministers of Youth held at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa in 2006, establishing 1 November as African Youth Day, the Sahrawi Republic has been celebrating this day by organizing various activities. These initiatives provide a platform for young Saharawis to discuss the issues of African youth, strengthen their participation in continental affairs and promote African identity and unity of destiny.

African Youth Consultations on Agenda 2063

With regard to the issue of consultation with African youth on Agenda 2063, and the reflection undertaken by the Heads of State of the African Union during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Union to prepare Africa for the next fifty years, the Sahrawi Republic has organized consultations with civil society bodies, including representatives from several sectors, under the theme: *"Youth united in action for Agenda 2063"*.

These consultations were structured around several workshops on the following themes:

- Resource mobilization and human capacity development, with a particular focus on health, education, science, research, technology and innovation, as well as women, youth and persons with disabilities;
- Economic development through improved agricultural infrastructure, land reforms, trade and investment;
- Peace, stability and good governance;
- Integration of women, youth and people with disabilities in all activities.

Article 18: The right of the family, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities to special protection measures

The protection of the family is constitutional in nature and receives special attention in the general policy of the Saharawi Republic, through programmes aimed at it, such as education, health and awareness-raising campaigns for the prevention of diseases and social ills.

Considering the family as the bedrock of society, the Saharawi legislator enshrined it in the preamble to the Constitution, recalling that the Saharawi people are determined to build democratic institutions guaranteeing political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms, as well as rights related to the family, an essential pillar of society.

The provisions of article 39 of the Constitution give this institution special importance, requiring the State to protect mothers, children, the elderly and the disabled through the establishment of appropriate institutions and the adoption of appropriate laws. **Article 40 adds** : *"The State guarantees to the fathers, mothers, widows of martyrs, their minor children, the wounded, the detainees of the enemy, the disappeared and the victims of the war of liberation, material and moral rights defined by law."*

In this context, the Saharawi Government is working to create institutions, structures and programmes for the family, such as education, training, health care and programmes specific to children and maternity.

The Secretariat of State for Social Welfare and the Advancement of Women, established for this purpose, takes care of these categories, as well as persons with mental disabilities, through the establishment of specialized centres at the regional level.

The Saharawi family is also undergoing a demographic transition, with a population composed of 47.5% men and 52.5% women; 27% are under 15 years old; more than 60% are between the ages of 15 and 59; and 12.6% represent the 60 and over age group.

Measures taken in favour of the family

The proactive national policy, aimed at ensuring the stability of the family and strengthening the rights of its members, has led to the establishment of major programmes, including:

- **The Government Programme (2020-2025)**, dedicating about 40% of its resources to improving the living conditions of citizens, developing basic infrastructure and improving the performance of public institutions;
- The allocation of about 17 per cent of the State's overall resources to social development;
- The increase in the minimum wage ("allowances");
- Social security coverage directly or indirectly benefiting 98% of the population.

At the institutional level, a Ministry of Social Affairs and the Advancement of Women has been established, in parallel with the strengthening of the relevant legal framework, including the Family Code.

The effects of these efforts include:

- An improvement in life expectancy at birth: 76.7 years (76 years for men and 77.3 years for women);

- An increase in the national rate of access by families to public services in 2024: electricity 89%, natural gas 94.6%, drinking water 97%, sanitation 91%, mobile telephony 98.68%;
- A decrease in the infant mortality rate (22.1 per 1,000 in 2024);
- An increase in the rate of health coverage thanks to vaccination campaigns (more than 95% for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, and 99% for tuberculosis);
- A reduction in the maternal mortality ratio (76.9 per 100,000 live births in 2023).

The National Strategy for the Family

The National Constitution affirms that *"the family enjoys the protection of the State and society"*. This policy has contributed to the creation of an enabling environment at the social, cultural, economic and political levels, contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

In order to channel this dynamic towards an integrated vision of the family unit, the government has adopted a national family strategy, taking into account the new challenges and needs of the Saharawi family, influenced by national and international changes.

This vision is based on national spiritual values and the civilization of the nation, and draws its references from the regional and international commitments of the Saharawi Republic, in particular the Plan of Action for the African Family (African Union – Cotonou – July 2004).

The expected results of this strategy are:

- Define the prospects of the Saharawi family by 2025;
- To deepen the reflection on the orientations and specificities of relationships and behaviors within the family;
- Identify constraints that may limit the effectiveness of family contribution to development;
- Identify the areas of intervention of all partners involved in the framework of the national strategy for the family.

Areas of the National Family Strategy include:

- The protection and strengthening of family ties and their roles;
- The promotion of the values of solidarity and the mobilization of actors;
- Strengthening rights and services for people with disabilities;
- Improving families' access to information and communication technologies.

The implementation of the national family strategy is carried out jointly by the various sectors of activity, national institutions and civil society. Roles and responsibilities are divided according to the missions entrusted to each actor, and an evaluation report is presented annually to the government.

Women and children are given special attention and equal treatment at all levels. Thus, in order to strengthen the presence of women in the political sphere, an organic law had been adopted to broaden their participation in elected councils, establishing for the first time a system of minimum quotas in most elective bodies.

In the same spirit, a national strategy for the integration and advancement of women has been put in place, focusing on improving women's rights in all areas (rights, education and vocational training, health, economy, culture, information and communication technologies, the media, the environment, decision-making, and women in difficult situations). The strategy is a national priority and integrates the gender perspective into its action plans, in line with the ten areas of *the African Women's Decade*.

The public authorities have launched the national implementation of the *African Women's Decade 2010-2020*, adopted at the 15th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in July 2010 in Kampala, Uganda.

The Saharawi Republic also guarantees the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children (2008-2015), with the participation of representatives of national institutions, non-governmental organizations, as well as children and adolescents, boys and girls, including those with disabilities.

The national action strategy is part of a government plan inspired by national multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder programmes, as well as regional and international commitments. It is based primarily on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is supported by a communication plan aimed at raising awareness and supporting actors working to promote and protect the rights of children, families, as well as education and health professionals.

Measures taken in the context of the reforms of the Family Code

As part of the implementation of judicial reforms, the Sahrawi Republic has introduced substantial reforms concerning marriage, divorce and their effects (custody rights, marital housing, alimony), as well as guardianship rules.

The key elements of these reforms are as follows:

1. In matters of law

Marriage, according to the Family Code, is considered a consensual contract requiring the agreement of both spouses. Therefore, no "forced marriage" can be allowed. The legal age of

marriage is set at eighteen (18) years for the future spouses, who have complete freedom to insert in the marriage certificate the clauses they deem necessary.

In the case of polygamy, the first wife may refuse to accept it. In addition, it is mandatory to inform both the first wife and the future second wife (i.e., the husband must obtain their consent for the second marriage). The husband must also seek and obtain the authorization of the personal status judge in order to contract a second marriage. The judge must verify whether the reasons invoked justify the marriage and whether the husband is able to ensure fairness and guarantee the conditions necessary for the married life of both wives.

Any procedure relating to divorce must necessarily give rise to compensation. Failure to comply with the contract inevitably leads to criminal prosecution, especially against the defaulting husband. The case law of the criminal courts of the Sahrawi Republic is particularly rigorous in this regard.

As far as custody rights are concerned, it is in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child. Thus, the father plays a secondary role in relation to the mother in the allocation of custody. In a large number of cases, the Sahrawi courts award custody of the children to the mother. According to the new provisions, a working mother cannot be deprived of her custody rights.

As for guardianship, the mother can:

- To substitute or substitute for the father, in case of emergency, to carry out certain acts of civil life (administrative procedures, schooling of children) in the event of the latter's absence;
- In the event of divorce, exercise the right of guardianship over the children in her custody.

Measures taken to strengthen women's political rights

Following the 1995 revision, Article 42 of the Constitution, amended in 2023, stipulates that the State *"shall work for the advancement of women and guarantee their political, economic, social, cultural and other participation in the construction of society and the development of the country"*. This provision aims to increase women's access to representation on elected councils.

The introduction of this article into the Constitution is part of the general strategy to consolidate good governance, strengthen democratic principles and ensure equal opportunities among citizens.

The implementation of this provision has led to the drafting and adoption of laws setting out the modalities for increasing the representation of women in elected councils. In practice, this has resulted in an increased openness of political participation to women, who have become involved in electoral competition in large numbers.

Following the last legislative elections held in April 2023, 21 women were elected as deputies to the National People's Council (Parliament), out of a total of 51 members. With this result, Saharawi women achieve a representation rate of 42%, placing them at the top of the Arab and African contexts in terms of women's parliamentary representation.

In addition, as part of the fight against digital illiteracy, the Saharawi Government has taken measures to facilitate women's access to information and communication technologies, in particular through collective training that has enabled 8,810 rural women to acquire skills in the use of ICTs.

Article 19: Right of peoples to equality

The Saharawi Republic supports equal treatment among States, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which enshrine the sovereign equality of all nations. No reason can justify the attack on the honour and dignity of peoples, nor their denigration or oppression.

Article 20: Right of peoples to self-determination

The Saharawi Republic fully adheres to the efforts of the international community to protect and defend the inalienable right of all peoples, without exception, to self-determination and full sovereignty over their national territory and natural resources, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the two International Covenants on Human Rights, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as other relevant international legal instruments and mechanisms.

The Republic's commitment to supporting the peoples under occupation in their quest for freedom stems from the unique experience of its people, who continue to suffer the horrors of colonialism and neocolonialism.

Since its proclamation in 1976, the Saharawi Republic has been dedicated to supporting international efforts to end colonialism, occupation and all forms of racial segregation, which are synonymous with the deprivation of human rights, cultural alienation and human exploitation.

The Republic has consistently advocated for the effective implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514, adopted on 14 December 1960. The effective implementation of that resolution would make it possible to eradicate colonialism, which is considered an indelible stain on human history, and to offer the peoples still under occupation the opportunity to determine their destiny freely, without military or political pressure or foreign interference.

Saharawi diplomacy is based on the values and principles set out in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Charter of the United Nations, based on:

- The consolidation of international peace and security and the contribution to the economic and social development of the peoples of the world;

- Respect for existing borders;
- Respect for the sovereignty of States and good neighbourliness;
- Friendship and cooperation among nations and peoples;
- Support for just causes around the world;
- The prohibition of the use of force or threats between States.

Article 21: Right of peoples to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources

The Saharawi Republic strongly reaffirms its commitment to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States and to respect for their national sovereignty, which is one of the pillars of its foreign policy. It considers that every State and every people has the right to freely exploit and manage its natural resources, in accordance with the relevant rules of international law.

Each State has the right to exercise full sovereignty over the territories under its jurisdiction, whether it be the soil, the subsoil, the airspace, the territorial waters or the continental shelf.

In this context, the Saharawi authorities have filed several complaints against international parties knowingly involved in the plundering of natural resources, including before the South African courts and the Court of Justice of the European Union, which have issued historic decisions mentioned earlier in this report.

In addition, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights issued a historic and unprecedented judgment on 22 September 2022 condemning the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara, describing it as a serious violation of the right to self-determination enshrined in Article 20 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Court affirmed that this right constitutes a peremptory norm of international law, and that all Member States of the African Union, individually and collectively, have a responsibility to protect the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination, supporting their struggle for freedom and avoiding any action that might recognize the legitimacy of the occupation or impede the exercise of this right.

The African Court has clarified that Morocco's accession to the African Union does not confer any legitimacy on its occupation of Western Sahara or the violations resulting from it, thus strengthening the legal steps of the Saharawi Republic against the exploitation of its natural resources and consolidating its cause in favour of decolonization.

These provisions reaffirm the commitment of the international community to respect the rights of the Saharan people to self-determination and the free disposal of their natural resources. They are an important step towards the protection of these rights and the prevention of their illegal exploitation, in accordance with the relevant legislation, including the legal opinion issued by the African Union.

Article 22: Right of peoples to economic, social and cultural development

The new development plan, which involves a concrete commitment from all sectors, focuses on structuring projects and areas related to services. Its main objective is to reduce dependence on humanitarian aid.

In the field of employment, the Saharawi Republic is working to ensure the effective integration of young people into the labour market. Several measures have been put in place to create employment opportunities and absorb young people, taking into account both young graduates and those without qualifications.

Article 23: Right of peoples to international peace and security

Saharawi diplomacy is based on the principle of *"promotion of international cooperation and development of friendly relations between States, based on equality, mutual interest and non-interference in internal affairs"*. It constantly works for peace, the resolution of crises, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the consolidation of the values of peace and national reconciliation.

At the regional level, the Saharawi Republic has consistently supported the efforts of the African Union to resolve regional conflicts, to conduct mediation and good offices missions, and to establish a stable climate conducive to good-neighbourliness, which are essential elements for the success of the continent's development efforts.

As part of its diplomatic action, the Republic is part of the international effort to combat terrorism, which is considered to be a negation of international peace and security. It supports and supports all initiatives taken at the international and continental levels. In this regard, the Saharawi State ratified the Additional Protocol to the African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism on 10 May 2006.

Article 24: Right of peoples to a healthy environment

Environmental issues and their repercussions on public life and citizens have become increasingly important, becoming an unavoidable concern for public authorities. Numerous regulatory and legislative provisions have been planned and implemented in order to organize the relations between the various social actors and the environment.

Although environmental information, awareness-raising, education and training actions are essential, they remain insufficient to fully address the many aspects of the ecological problem and to resolve the difficulties encountered by operators in the economic, institutional and social fields.

Environmental management for sustainability

The Saharawi Republic has paid special attention to the preservation of the environment by establishing a Secretariat of State for Water and the Environment in 2007. The latter is

mandated to establish the appropriate conditions and legislation for the protection of the environment, the safeguarding of its components, the prevention of its degradation and pollution, and to guarantee a framework free of nuisances, both inside and outside urban areas.

These efforts are aimed at implementing a national policy for environmental protection within the framework of sustainable development. This defines the fundamental principles and rules of environmental management: protection, restructuring, rational exploitation of natural resources, restoration of degraded environments, prevention and fight against all forms of pollution or nuisance; improvement of living conditions and quality of life; Valuation of available natural resources.

Environmental management is based on the organization of an information system, the definition of environmental standards, planning, the assessment of the impacts of development projects, as well as on the intervention of individuals and associations in environmental protection and the establishment of specific legal regimes. The legislation provides for provisions for the protection of biodiversity, the air and atmosphere, the waters and marine sites of the Saharaw, as well as for the fight against nuisances (chemicals, noise pollution).

In this context, the competent ministry has initiated cooperation with several foreign partners, particularly Spanish, in order to:

- Define a general policy for the protection of the environment and develop a national strategy for its implementation;
- To establish norms and standards relating to the elements of the environment and the modalities of their protection, while raising awareness among citizens of the importance of their preservation;
- Establish procedures for the management of substances that are harmful and hazardous to the environment, as well as guidelines for their disposal, storage, transport or destruction, identifying those whose handling is prohibited because it poses a threat to ecological safety.

Thus, the policy of *"environmental protection in the context of sustainable development"* mainly aims to:

- To promote sustainable national development by improving living conditions and ensuring a healthy environment;
- Strengthen information, increase awareness and encourage public and stakeholder participation in environmental protection measures.

An innovative project has been launched in cooperation with British and Saharawi researchers, consisting of the installation of measuring stations to record temperatures, wind speeds and humidity. The project, the first of its kind in Africa, combines modern data with traditional knowledge of natural phenomena to predict future climate conditions. It is expected to extend

to the liberated territories, with a view to the completion of sovereignty over all the lands currently under Moroccan occupation.

Implementation of the national integrated household waste management programme

The National Integrated Household Waste Management Programme is the starting point and reference framework for the new urban waste management policy. Its objective is to eradicate the uncontrolled disposal of waste and to organise its collection, transport and treatment in conditions that guarantee a healthy environment.

An integrated and progressive management of household waste has been developed, defining the main orientations for the introduction of this system through:

- The reorganization of the municipal administration in charge of waste management;
- Strengthening the capacity of waste collection and transport agencies within municipal areas;
- The introduction of suitable collection equipment.

The programme includes:

- The location of collection sites and their regular transfer to areas more than 20 kilometres from homes;
- The development of approved landfill sites and controlled landfills, built in accordance with environmental requirements (impact studies, risk assessments, etc.);
- The implementation of waste recycling projects, with the support of highly qualified international experts, in order to guarantee the compliance and quality of these projects with international standards.

Urban Environment Management

The right of individuals to live in an urban environment conducive to their well-being and development is recognized. The aim is to define the provisions for establishing the components of urban policy in the context of spatial planning and sustainable development.

The general principles of urban policy include:

- Local management, involving the search for mechanisms and procedures that allow citizens to participate directly, or through their representatives, in the management of programmes and actions concerning their living environment and in the evaluation of their impacts;
- Human development, considering man as the main wealth and the purpose of any development policy;
- Sustainable development, through which urban policy contributes to growth that meets the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations;

- Good governance, which involves listening to citizens and acting in the general interest, within a transparent framework;
- Information, guaranteeing citizens continuous communication on the state, evolution and prospects of their municipalities and districts;
- Culture, making the city a space for creativity and cultural expression in accordance with national values;
- The preservation of the city's tangible and intangible heritage, which must be maintained, protected and enhanced.

Article 25: Duty to raise awareness about the Charter

The dissemination of the culture of human and peoples' rights, as well as the principles contained in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other international and continental human rights instruments, is of fundamental importance to Saharawi political actors and civil society organizations.

The meetings, symposia and study days organized by the various governmental and non-governmental sectors are privileged opportunities to popularize documents relating to the culture of human and peoples' rights and to make them known, in order to contribute to the edification of the Saharawi human being and to equip him with legal and legal knowledge in accordance with the high principles of human rights. The national media (print, radio, audiovisual and digital) play a key role in raising citizens' awareness of their rights and duties, in accordance with national laws and relevant international conventions.

In the field of education, the Ministry of Education and Education is devoting considerable efforts to the development of the necessary tools and educational programmes aimed at disseminating and generalizing the principles of human rights, as well as the values of tolerance and solidarity in Saharawi schools. On the occasion of World Human Rights Day, celebrated on 10 December, the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Promotion of Women organizes annual media, awareness-raising and training activities focusing on women's rights, in order to raise awareness of the role of women in political life among the national public. to enshrine the principle of equality and to promote its active participation in decision-making and decision-making.

The National Union of Saharawi Women is pursuing the same objective through its Department of Information, Culture and Guidance, which oversees the organization of numerous symposia on women, their rights, their place and responsibilities in society, in cooperation with various foreign non-governmental associations.

In collaboration with civil society actors, the National Union of Saharawi Women regularly organizes study days and workshops, at the national and regional levels, to popularize the content of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women. This initiative follows the participation of the Saharawi Republic in the regional

consultation for North Africa on strategies for accelerating the ratification of the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women, held in Tunis from 2 to 5 April 2004.

The Saharawi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of the State's commitments, has distributed numerous copies of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as the Protocol on the Rights of Women, to various relevant ministries, training centres and associations, in order to contribute to national awareness-raising.

The Ministry of Justice, for its part, organizes several training and qualification sessions aimed at the dissemination of the culture of human rights, as part of its permanent annual programmes, for actors in the judicial sector, including the judicial police and law enforcement agencies, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

At a semi-official and informal level, the Saharawi National Human Rights Commission plays a major role in monitoring and promoting human rights at the national level, monitoring the human rights situation, monitoring national institutions and bodies, and organizing awareness-raising and training activities necessary to strengthen the culture of human rights. It regularly participates in all meetings and events that allow this culture to be disseminated to the public, whether through direct events or media programs.

Finally, various civil society organizations are carrying out similar activities, including the Association of Relatives of Saharawi Detainees and Disappeared Persons, which has been active in the field of human rights since the late 1980s.

Article 26: Duty to guarantee the independence of the judiciary

The Sahrawi Republic is committed to creating conditions conducive to the promotion of the role of justice, in order to achieve equity and bring it closer to the citizens, convinced that freedom and human dignity can be guaranteed only in a society that preserves the sovereignty of the law and the equality of individuals before it.

The judiciary in the Sahrawi Republic is independent and is exercised within the framework of the law, in accordance with article 124 of the Constitution. The State protects the independence of the judiciary through the provisions of article 135, which stipulates:

- The State shall protect the judge against any form of pressure or interference likely to harm the exercise of his mission and the integrity of his judgments;
- It protects him against threats, insults, defamation and aggression of any kind, in the exercise of his duties or on the occasion thereof;
- In the event of damage suffered by the judge, whether material, physical or moral, the State undertakes to compensate the resulting direct losses.

The Penal Code strengthens the independence of the judiciary by providing for sanctions against any person or official, regardless of his or her position, who interferes with the powers of the judiciary or obstructs the execution of judicial orders or judgments.

As part of the establishment of the rule of law, the Sahrawi judicial system has been undergoing a continuous process of reforms since 2004, including the following:

- The regular revision of Saharawi laws and their submission to Parliament for adoption;
- The modernization of the functioning of the courts by updating their equipment and the introduction of information technology to improve judicial administration and bring it closer to citizens;
- Strengthening human resources through training and retraining, both at home and abroad;
- Attention to rehabilitation institutions and centres for minors, so that they fulfil their educational and reintegration role.

Article 27: Exercise of rights and freedoms with respect for the rights of others, collective security, morals and the general interest

Rights and freedoms shall be exercised in accordance with the Constitution and the law. Under no circumstances may their exercise infringe the rights of others, collective security, morality or the general interest.

Various pieces of legislation, supported by regulations, provide a framework for the exercise of these rights and freedoms, define their legal regime and set out the penalties applicable in the event of violation of the rights of others or transgression of essential requirements related to collective security, morality and the general interest. For example, this concerns fundamental laws (Civil Code, Family Code, Criminal Code, etc.) as well as special laws.

For the citizen, the obligation to exercise and enjoy his rights and freedoms while respecting those of others is enshrined in the Constitution. In this regard, the Sahrawi Republic, through its judiciary and security organs, guarantees compliance with this obligation, thus ensuring the security of persons, property and national society, as well as the exercise of public freedoms.

State intervention in this area is carried out in accordance with the Constitution and the relevant laws and regulations, including the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, under the supervision of the prosecutors.

While ensuring that every citizen complies with this constitutional requirement, the State acts as a regulator, protecting public rights and freedoms through the implementation of procedures and mechanisms established by the legislator, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant laws, including international conventions and treaties ratified by the Sahrawi Republic.

Articles 28 and 29: Other Individual Duties – Harmonious Development of the Family

The family, viewed from the point of view of its harmonious development, social cohesion and respect, has received special attention from the legislator, the public authorities and civil society. The Saharawi legislator has enshrined several legal provisions relating to the family, including certain fundamental rules of the Civil Code (capacity, civil majority, etc.) and the Code of Civil and Administrative Procedure.

Civil society also shows a strong interest in issues related to the family, women and the rights of the child, an area in which many national associations have been actively engaged. The protection of women and children, as well as assistance to parents, are the pillars of the family policy of the Saharawi Republic.

Protection of women

Saharawi women have made significant progress since the proclamation of the Republic, particularly in the areas of political participation, the economy, knowledge, medicine, education and justice. They are now fully integrated into the political landscape and popular representation. Their protection is guaranteed by:

- **The National Constitution** : it subjects women to the obligations of citizenship without any discrimination and protects their rights by subjecting them to the same duties as men;
- **International instruments** : the Saharawi Republic has ratified several instruments relating to women's rights, including the Maputo Protocol;
- **National laws and regulations**: Numerous legal and regulatory provisions enshrine women's rights, in particular in the Family Code. In addition, the Sahrawi Republic enshrines equal pay for men and women according to the principle: *"Equal pay for equal work"*.

Child protection

The child enjoys enhanced protection in the Saharawi judicial system and in the Constitution, which stipulates that *"the law shall protect the rights of parents in relation to the education and protection of their children"*. The principle of protection of the family and children is thus affirmed, with the recognition that the exercise of everyone's freedoms must take into account the rights of others (Article 49). In the event of failure by the parents, the protection of the children is the responsibility of the juvenile judge.

From the birth of the living and viable child, he or she becomes a subject of full rights, enjoying special protection until he or she reaches the age of criminal responsibility first, and then that of civil liability set by the Saharawi legislator at 18 years of age.

National Laws and Regulations

- a. **Civil Code** : legal personality begins at the birth of a living child and ends at death. The child must have a name, and the father's surname is passed on to his children.
- b. **Nationality Code** : A child born to Saharawi parents is a Saharawi by operation of law under article 7. Saharawi nationality is acquired by birth on the national territory (right of soil). A child born in the Sahrawi Republic of unknown parents is deemed to be a Sahrawi. However, if, while a minor is a minor, his filiation with a foreign citizen is established and he holds the nationality of the latter under his national legislation, he is considered to be non-Saharawi. In addition, any newborn found on the territory of the Saharawi Republic is presumed to have been born there, unless proven otherwise.
- c. **Family Code** : Under article 75, the father must provide for his child, unless there is a total lack of resources. For boys, the obligation lasts until they reach the age of majority; for girls, until marriage. This obligation continues if the child is disabled or still in school. It stops as soon as the child is able to provide for his or her needs.

Any person who is totally or partially incapacitated (minority, insanity, intellectual disability, prodigality) is represented by a legal guardian appointed in accordance with the law. The law protects the child as long as he or she has not reached the age of responsibility, rendering his or her acts null and void in civil law. When he reaches the age of discernment, his actions are valid if they are beneficial to him, but null and void if they are detrimental to him.

The father is the legal guardian of his minor children. Upon her death, guardianship automatically reverts to the mother. In the event of divorce, the judge entrusts guardianship to the parent who has obtained custody. The management of the minor's property is governed by legal provisions requiring the prior authorisation of the judge for certain acts (sale, division or mortgage of immovable property, sale of valuable movable property, investment of funds).

A minor under guardianship may not be forced into marriage; his consent is essential. Ascendants (father and mother) are an integral part of the family unit as long as they live under the authority of the head of the family. Alimony includes food, clothing, medical care, housing or rent, and other basic needs. Non-payment exposes the debtor to the penalties provided for in the Criminal Code.

Child protection

Sahrawi legislation protects the child, whether he or she is a victim or perpetrator of a criminal offence, in a comprehensive approach that respects the specificity of childhood.

- **As a victim** : the Penal Code explicitly criminalizes any act that violates the physical or moral integrity of the child, regardless of sex, and provides for severe penalties. Penalties are increased when the victim is a child, and age is sometimes a constituent element of the offence or an aggravating circumstance. The specialized courts deal with these cases with particular rigour.

- **As a perpetrator** : the procedures applicable to minors are governed by the Code of Criminal Procedure, including the specific rules on juvenile delinquency. These provisions are aimed at the protection of children, with a focus on re-education and social reintegration rather than punitive punishment.

d. Code of Criminal Procedure

The law sets the age of criminal discernment at more than 18 years of age, specifying that the age used to determine criminal responsibility is that of the offender on the day of the commission of the offence. Article 444 establishes the principle that, in the case of crimes or misdemeanours, a minor under the age of 18 may be subject to the following preventive or educational measures:

- Surrender of the child to his or her parents, guardian or a trusted person;
- Release under supervision;
- Placement in a school or professional establishment, public or private, specialised;
- Placement in a specialized medical or medico-educational institution;
- Coverage by a public assistance organization.

PART V

SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS BY MOROCCO IN THE OCCUPIED AND LIBERATED TERRITORIES OF THE SAHARAWI REPUBLIC

The Saharawi people have lived for more than 141 years under continuous colonial conditions, including almost 50 years of Moroccan occupation covering about 80% of the territory of Western Sahara, while the remaining 20% falls under the sovereignty of the Saharawi Republic. The occupied areas of Western Sahara are among the most isolated regions in the world, according to many international organizations, with the only international presence

there being the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), whose mandate does not include monitoring or protecting human rights.

Despite declared international efforts, all efforts to resolve the conflict have failed, despite spending more than \$2 billion on a UN mission widely described as ineffective. Since the adoption of the joint settlement plan between the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, 16 United Nations special representatives and 6 personal envoys of the Secretary-General have been appointed for Western Sahara. The Security Council has adopted more than 78 resolutions on the region, and the General Assembly more than 73, under the mandate of 7 successive Secretaries-General, without the Saharawi people having been able to exercise their right to self-determination.

At the same time, the Moroccan occupying state imposed a strict media and legal blockade in the occupied territories, prohibiting any independent press or the presence of international observers. Between 2014 and 2025, more than 300 journalists, human rights activists and international observers from 21 nationalities were expelled, extending a similar policy applied to hundreds of others before.

In terms of human rights, approximately 4,500 cases of enforced disappearances and more than 30,000 arbitrary arrests have been documented, including 32 Saharan political prisoners still detained in Moroccan prisons. In the first year of the Moroccan invasion, more than 2,000 women and children were killed by massive aerial bombardments, including the use of napalm and white phosphorus bombs, which are prohibited under international law. Thousands of Saharawis have also been extrajudicially executed or tortured in Moroccan detention centres.

Between 2020 and 2024, 127 Sahrawi civilians were killed by drone strikes by the Moroccan army. The landmines laid by the army have caused the death or maiming of nearly 2,600 victims, many of whom suffer from permanent disabilities. Experts estimate that between 7 and 10 million mines have been laid in fifty years of occupation.

These serious violations take place in a context of almost total absence of international humanitarian organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, which does not provide any assistance to the Sahrawi victims of human rights violations and war crimes committed by Moroccan forces. They are accompanied by a policy of intensive colonization and systematic plundering of natural resources, with the complicity of 198 international companies and hundreds of Moroccan companies (see Appendix 10).

Despite the restrictions, renowned international organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, were able to visit occupied Western Sahara after many obstacles, meet with Saharawi human rights defenders, victims and families of disappeared persons and political prisoners. They have issued detailed reports and clear recommendations on the seriousness of the situation (see annex 11). The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had visited the country in 2006, and the European Parliament had sent a mission in 2009, explicitly linking the persistence of serious violations against Saharan civilians to the denial of their inalienable right to self-determination.

The most serious crimes suffered by the Saharawi people

- **The genocide, now legally established**In the context of complaints filed by Saharawi victims against Moroccan security officials before the Spanish National Court, and after the completion of the judicial proceedings, Judgment No. 1/2015 of 9 April 2015, issued by Judge Pablo Ruz, recognized the existence of a "*genocide against the Saharawi people*" that caused thousands of victims. The judge affirmed that "*from November 1975, the date of the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara, then a Spanish colony, until 1991, the date of the ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario Front, there was a massive and systematic attack against Saharawi civilians by the Moroccan armed and police forces, aimed at totally or partially destroying this population and seizing Western Sahara*".
- **Enforced disappearance, as a crime, remains a persistent reality in Western Sahara.**
4,500 cases of enforced disappearances have been documented, including 445 Saharawis whose fate remains unknown. Moroccan authorities denied the existence of these victims until 1991, when 322 disappeared people were released after about 15 years in secret prisons. Morocco continued to deny the fate of others, only admitting in 2010 that 47 people had died in custody.

A report by the Moroccan Royal Consultative Council for Human Rights (CCDH), published in 2010 under the title "*Follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission*", acknowledged the deaths of 351 Saharawis (see annex 12). According to the report, 144 victims died during military operations, without identification or clarification of the circumstances, while the rest died in custody or summarily executed:

- 115 people in various military barracks, including 14 children aged 3 months to 15 years and 11 women;
- 43 people in the centers of Agdez and Kalaat M'Gouna, including 2 women;
- 23 people in the city of Laayoune.

The majority of these victims died under torture in inhumane conditions, while 13 were executed on the basis of military trials without transparency on the proceedings. The report explicitly places responsibility for these crimes on the Moroccan army, gendarmerie, police and auxiliary forces. To date, no remains have been handed over to the families, who continue to suffer from the psychological and human consequences of this criminal policy. The latest known case is that of Lahbib Ahmed Hamiti (Aghrishi), who disappeared on 7 February 2022.

In this context, Spanish human rights experts conducted an in-depth survey entitled "*Oasis of Memory*", published in 2008 by the Hegoa Institute for International Cooperation and Development Studies, as well as by the Commission of the Joint Diocesan Project for the Recovery of Historical Memory (Remhi). This investigation, in two volumes, is based on hundreds of corroborating testimonies, visits to mass grave sites and DNA analyses. It

concludes that the phenomenon of enforced disappearance in Western Sahara represents the highest rate in the world, compared to the Saharawi population.

- **Arbitrary arrests coupled with torture and ill-treatment**

In recent years, the Moroccan State has continued extensive campaigns of arbitrary arrests and fabrication of charges against Saharawi human rights defenders and Saharawi civilians, subjecting them to legal proceedings without basic guarantees of a fair trial. These practices are mainly aimed at their positions and opinions on the question of Western Sahara, or their participation in peaceful demonstrations and protests demanding the exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination.

In this context, more than 30,000 cases of arbitrary arrests have been recorded, from which the persons concerned have been released after serving their sentences. However, 32 cases remain in political detention in various Moroccan prisons (see annex 14), including detainees from the *Gdeim Izik* group and those from the Saharawi student group. These prisoners live in appalling and degrading conditions, marked by long periods of solitary confinement, in an environment where the most basic fundamental rights are not respected, including those guaranteed by the relevant international treaties and conventions, including the rules of international humanitarian law and, in particular, article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Although the Moroccan State has ratified the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment for several years, and in 2006 adopted a law criminalizing the practice of torture, in addition to the lifting of its reservation to article 20 of the Convention, it continues, according to the testimonies of victims and the reports of international organizations, to torture, rape and ill-treatment of Saharawi civilians, violating their right to physical integrity, personal security and human dignity (see annex 15).

These practices have affected women, men, children, the elderly and people with disabilities, without distinction. The testimonies of the victims indicate that psychological and physical torture, as well as ill-treatment, are inflicted by the Moroccan intelligence services in various places: the public highway, peripheral areas, during house searches, inside police, gendarmerie or army vehicles, and during arrests or detentions in police custody or preventive detention, whether in police stations, gendarmerie brigades or in unofficial detention centres.

The Moroccan intelligence services use a variety of methods of torture, aggression and ill-treatment against Saharawi civilians, including:

- **Physical torture** : assault and battery with sticks, electric cables, electrocution, cigarette burns, mutilation by sharp objects, simulated drowning, blindfolding and tying of hands and feet.
- **Psychological torture** : insults, degrading remarks, sleep deprivation, prolonged interrogations, threats of rape or harm to the integrity of relatives, death threats.

- **Rape** : sexual abuse of any kind, direct or indirect, through the use of sticks, bottles or other objects.

Some documents and testimonies attesting to these practices of torture and ill-treatment by the Moroccan intelligence services were included in the documents annexed to the previous report of 2013.



Photos of some Saharawi political prisoners in Moroccan prisons.

The situation of Saharawi political prisoners in Moroccan prisons

Saharawi political prisoners endure deplorable and inhumane conditions in the various Moroccan prisons, due to the absence of minimum standards of human dignity and the deliberate desire of the General Delegation to the Moroccan Prison Administration to mistreat and punish them for their positions on the question of Western Sahara. Many human rights organizations have published reports on this subject (see annexes 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20).

The suffering of Saharawi political prisoners can be summed up in particular in:

- Arbitrary transfer to prisons several hundred kilometres away from the family home;
- Solitary confinement and incarceration in individual cells;
- The prohibition of any contact with the outside world;
- Permanent surveillance and excavations;
- The refusal of direct visits;
- Physical and psychological torture;

- The refusal of the prison administrations to receive complaints from prisoners;
- The prohibition of receiving newspapers, books and correspondence;
- Confinement in overcrowded cells, often with dangerous common law prisoners;
- Discrimination and incitement of Moroccan common law prisoners against them;
- Malnutrition, lack of hygiene, ventilation and walking;
- Lack of medical care, medication and health support;
- The financial burden of families for food and medicine throughout detention;
- The ban on continuing studies.

These violations, related to the conditions of detention, investigations and trials, constitute a flagrant violation by the Moroccan State of international fair trial standards, as enshrined by:

- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981);
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two protocols (1966);
- The Convention against Torture (1948, entered into force in 1986);
- The Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment (1988);
- Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1971);
- The Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990);
- The Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary (1985).

Economic, social and cultural rights

Economic, social and cultural rights are fundamental human rights that must be guaranteed to everyone without discrimination. They are enshrined in all international and regional human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Although Western Sahara is rich in natural and fishery resources, the Moroccan state continues to exploit and deplete them in a systematic manner, with the complicity of 198 international companies, hundreds of Moroccan companies and the European Union. This practice violates international instruments and rulings relating to Non-Self-Governing Territories, including the legal opinion of the United Nations Legal Counsel, Hans Corell, of 29 January 2002 on the natural resources of Western Sahara (see annex 21), as well as the relevant judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Pending the organization of a free and fair referendum under the aegis of the United Nations, enabling the Saharawi people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, Morocco

remains obliged under international law to guarantee Saharawi citizens all their political, economic, social and cultural rights. However, there is evidence that these rights continue to be violated, particularly in the following areas:

The right to work

- Exclusion of Saharawi workers from the labour market, despite sufficient natural resources to absorb unemployment;
- Freezing of the salaries of Saharawi human rights defenders due to their political positions, dismissals and deprivation of professional opportunities;
- Spoliation of the rights of Saharawi workers and pensioners of the *Fosbucraa* phosphate mining company, in violation of employment contracts and rights acquired under the Spanish colonial administration;
- Complicity of the Moroccan state and employers in the exploitation of workers in undignified conditions, with derisory salaries and without social or health coverage.

The right to health

- Severe shortage of medical and paramedical staff;
- Dysfunctions of emergency and maternity services;
- Cases of deaths of pregnant women, fetuses and newborns due to negligence and medical errors;
- Deplorable hospital conditions.
- Corruption, clientelism and discrimination against Saharawis;
- Existence of networks of doctors, nurses, pharmacists and medical equipment dealers exploiting patients;
- Absence of a university hospital in the occupied cities;
- Lack of medical services in rural areas;
- Violations in hospitals against Sahrawi demonstrators injured during peaceful protests: kidnappings and arrests of victims undergoing treatment (cases of Aminatou Haidar and Najem El Oubban, among others);
- Subjecting some medical personnel to security guidelines concerning Sahrawi victims;
- Participation of some medical personnel in the cover-up of cases of torture by refusing to issue medical certificates;
- Denial of access to health care for victims because of their political positions;

- Participation of certain medical and paramedical personnel in acts of violence against Saharawi victims;
- Lack of physical and psychological rehabilitation centres for mine victims.

The right to education

- Inadequacy of Moroccan school curricula with the Sahrawi cultural and social identity, attempt at "Moroccanization" and erasure of national identity through the imposition of Moroccan surnames;
- Militarization of certain schools, transformed into quasi-barracks;
- Spread of hatred and division between pupils and students, encouraged by teachers and administrators under the influence of the Moroccan intelligence services, leading to violent clashes between Saharawis and Moroccan settlers;
- Violence, torture and provocations against Sahrawi pupils and students in and around schools and universities;
- Absence of faculties, schools and higher institutes in the occupied cities, hindering the continuation of studies, especially for young Saharawi girls.

The problem of anti-personnel mines

- Since the outbreak of the political and military conflict between Morocco and the Polisario Front at the end of 1975, anti-personnel mines scattered throughout the territory of Western Sahara and southern Morocco have continued to claim human lives, particularly among herders and inhabitants of rural areas, as well as among herds, due to the refusal of the Moroccan State to assume its responsibility for the signage, fencing and demining of mined areas, and the absence of awareness campaigns aimed at Saharawi citizens on the dangers of mines.
- The death toll from mine explosions stands at more than 600 people of all ages and genders, while at least 2,000 civilians have been injured, some with permanent disabilities.
- It should be stressed that these mines and other unexploded ordnance not only threaten human life, but also hinder the mobility of a large social fringe whose livelihood depends exclusively on pastoralism and livestock. The severity of the situation is compounded by the movement of mines due to natural factors (floods, floods) to areas previously considered safe.
- The United Nations estimates that the area of mine-related danger zones in Western Sahara alone is 100,000 km², or more than a third of the territory, as a result of Morocco's construction of a military wall of more than 2,700 km, dividing the people and land of Western Sahara into two parts. This wall is guarded by more than 100,000 Moroccan soldiers and protected by between 7 and 10 million mines, which continue to kill innocent Sahrawi civilians.
- Mine victims in the occupied territories of Western Sahara suffer from persistent marginalization and indifference, due to the absence of physical and psychological

rehabilitation centres, lack of medical care, social reintegration programmes and material compensation from the Moroccan occupying State.

Continued drone attacks against Saharawi civilians

The case of seven civilians killed in a car on November 14, 2021



Following the Moroccan military aggression of 13 November 2020 in the area of **Guerguerat**, in the south-west of Western Sahara, against Sahrawi civilians peacefully protesting, and after the flagrant violation of the ceasefire agreement reached in 1991, three decades of truce under the aegis of the United Nations have ended, revealing the failure of this organisation to achieve its fundamental objective: the organisation of a referendum on self-determination.

Since the resumption of hostilities, Moroccan forces have used armed drones against unarmed civilians, without respecting the principles of distinction, proportionality, and military necessity. These attacks have led to a dramatic increase in the number of casualties, caused massive forced displacement, worsened the humanitarian situation and heightened tensions and fear among the population. This makes humanitarian and diplomatic intervention essential to reduce suffering and protect the rights of civilians.

Moroccan forces have employed unconventional weapons with a variety of warheads, including fragmentation, thermal pressure, and cumulative projectiles, increasing their destructive power. Shocking scenes of completely charred bodies were observed at the scene of the attacks, sometimes making it impossible to identify the victims.

Analysis of field imagery reveals that these strikes targeted innocent civilians using unconventional munitions, suggesting the use of thermobaric weapons, causing extreme burns and instant deaths. These practices raise legal and ethical questions about the nature of these military operations, which can only be qualified as **war crimes**.

Drone Attack Statistics

- **Total number of people targeted** : 300, through 123 attacks in four years.
- **Deadliest year** : 2021, with 47 attacks (38% of the total).

- **The human toll** : more than 160 victims, 63% of whom died, confirming the nature of collective executions.

This systematic targeting illustrates a tragic reality: lives lost, land devastated and populations reduced to wandering, with no regard for the lives of innocent people.

This methodical targeting resulted in the death or injury of more than 160 people, 63 per cent of whom died, confirming that these strikes were not mere military operations, but ruthless mass executions by missiles.

Of these victims, 123 were Saharawi, more than 47 per cent of the total, while 88 were Maurititanians (33 per cent). The remaining victims were Algerian, Malian or Sudanese nationals, mostly travellers or migrant workers in search of subsistence.

Statistics show that 49% of the victims were travellers, which shows that the attacks were by no means random, but mainly aimed at mobility and the transport of goods. This *modus operandi* reflects a deliberate desire to paralyse displacement, increase the living costs of Saharawi refugees, aggravate the humanitarian crisis and create chronic instability, compromising economic activity and accentuating the isolation of the region.

60% of attacks on civilians took place in southern Western Sahara, including in areas east of Morocco's military wall. This pattern confirms the persistence of a strategy aimed at imposing a new status quo on the ground by intensifying strikes, accentuating security fragility.

The material consequences are considerable:

- Destruction of more than 104 vehicles belonging mainly to Saharawis and Maurititanians;
- Demolition of critical infrastructure;
- Decimation of hundreds of head of cattle (camels, sheep), depriving rural and nomadic families of their main sources of subsistence.

This situation has forced many families to flee, fleeing the threat of further attacks.

Children account for 5 per cent of the victims, a relatively small but tragic proportion. On November 25, 2021, a Moroccan drone killed eight children simultaneously as they sought refuge with their families, illustrating the direct attack on innocent civilians.

In total, between 30,000 and 40,000 people have been forced to leave their homes. The lack of medical assistance has often led to the death of the wounded due to a lack of adequate care and relief.

An examination of the results of Moroccan drone strikes against civilians establishes with supporting evidence that:

- These attacks took place in open desert areas, devoid of any vegetation cover, offering perfect visibility. In such conditions, it is easy to distinguish the most precise details,

from the colors and shapes of the vehicles to the personal belongings of the victims, allowing a clear distinction between military and civilian targets. Despite this, the strikes did not differentiate between innocent people and combatants, aggravating the tragedy of the local populations.

- These attacks occurred tens of kilometers from the Moroccan wall, in areas where civilians posed no threat to the Moroccan army and where there were no military clashes. 65% of the strikes took place directly on international border lines. For example, Moroccan drones struck areas in the south, more than 100 km from the wall, in the Sahrawi-Mauritanian border region of Ahfir, and in the north, more than 90 km away, in the area of Ain Bentili, also Saharawi-Mauritanian.
- **Humanitarian consequences and continued attacks**
- It should be noted that these attacks were carried out in areas where the Saharawi army was not active, which meant that many victims remained for hours, even days, without medical services or evacuation. The example of **Mbark Sebaï and his companion**, killed in Imrikli and who remained at the site of their wound for more than twenty-three days without a dignified and respectful burial, tragically illustrates this situation.
- In some cases, relatives and friends of the victims were afraid to venture out to rescue them, fearing that they themselves would be targeted by Moroccan drones. Such was the fate of the young **Didier Mahmoud Ahoybita**, who was hit directly by a missile while trying to assist victims who fell on November 24, 2022 in the Sahrawi-Mauritanian border area of Ahfir.

Forced displacement and exodus of populations

- These attacks and bombings have caused a **mass exodus** of indigenous populations to areas considered safer. Thousands of people, living continuously or intermittently in the liberated territories, in small communities in Tifariti, Mehaires, Agouenit, Mijek and Bir Lahlou, have been forced to abandon their tents and homes under the threat of indiscriminate strikes. Many have found refuge in Algeria, while others have fled to Mauritania.
- These Moroccan drone attacks against Saharawi civilians constitute a **continuation of the crime of genocide** against the Saharawi people and represent a direct threat to regional stability. They make urgent humanitarian and diplomatic intervention essential to reduce the suffering of civilians and ensure the protection of their human rights.

Conclusion

By ratifying the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Saharawi Republic reaffirms its constant commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights at the national and continental levels, as well as its willingness to contribute to the development of a regional system based on the values of justice and equality, guaranteeing the dignity of peoples. The Saharawi Republic has devoted its efforts to harmonizing its national legislation with the provisions of the Charter, to implementing legal and procedural frameworks ensuring the effective enjoyment and protection of these rights, thereby strengthening the rule of law, transparency and accountability.

However, the persistent violations suffered by the Saharan people, particularly in the occupied territories of the Republic, remain the direct consequence of the denial of their fundamental right to self-determination. These territories are subject to a total security, military, legal and media blockade imposed by the Moroccan occupation forces, which systematically obstruct any international human rights monitoring. For this reason, the United Nations and African Union human rights mechanisms have been unable to provide any assistance to victims, or even to document and follow up on serious and ongoing violations.

Despite these obstacles, the Sahrawi Republic confirms its full readiness to cooperate with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, its rapporteurs and working groups, in order to strengthen the protection of human rights, monitor the situation and produce reports on the occupied territories, the liberated territories and the Sahrawi refugee camps. The Saharawi Republic calls on African mechanisms to draw inspiration from the methods of many international human rights organizations, which circumvent the restrictions imposed by the occupation by exploiting digital means of communication to collect testimonies from victims, collaborate with Saharawi civil society organizations and interact with human rights defenders living under occupation, including Sahrawi political prisoners held in Moroccan prisons.

In conclusion, the Sahrawi Republic reaffirms its willingness to strengthen constructive cooperation with the Commission, to provide the necessary information and to respond to any request for clarification. It underlines that the protection and guarantee of human rights is a shared responsibility, requiring the combination of international and regional efforts to put an end to violations, consolidate the rule of law and ensure respect for the fundamental rights of peoples, without discrimination or exclusion.

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- **Annex 04** : Report of the Western Sahara Resource Monitoring and Environmental Protection Association.
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