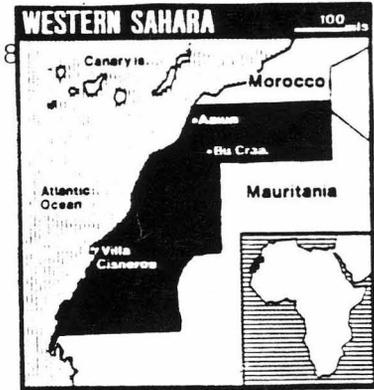


WESTERN SAHARA CAMPAIGN, U.S.A.

FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

Box 20745 New York New York 10025 (212)864-6588



6 January 1987

Dear Friend,

Since 1985 our organization has strived to inform and keep current people the world over who are concerned with the right to self-determination and the quality of life of the Sahrawi people of Western Sahara.

This has been a formidable task. The Sahara is located in Northwest Africa. While a great deal of media attention has been focused on the continent in the past few years, it mostly has been channelled to East or Southern Africa. One rarely finds information on the Western Sahara in the printed media. This is disconcerting when one considers that a war has raged in the region for eleven years.

It is for these reasons that the Campaign would like to bring to your attention a new book on the subject entitled Fueling the Fire: U.S. Policy and the Western Sahara Conflict. The book outlines the United States abandonment of the principles of justice and support for the right of self-determination, and its backing of this long war designed to crush the Sahrawi people's aspirations to live free and independent in their own country.

We at the Campaign are pleased to have the opportunity to offer you this important new work. For a tax-deductible contribution* of \$25.00, we will provide you with a complimentary hard-back edition of the book. Your donation will assist the Campaign's efforts to conduct research and dissemination on human rights and humanitarian concerns in Western Sahara. Enclosed please find a pamphlet describing the book and our brochure.

Thank you for continuing to raise your voice to break the silence on Western Sahara.

Happy New Year!

*Checks to be payable to
the Africa Fund-Western
Sahara Campaign

Sincerely,


Rachel D. Kaplan
Board Member

Enclosures
RDK:dcc

WESTERN SAHARA CAMPAIGN, U.S.A.
For Human Rights and Humanitarian Relief



Box 20745, New York, New York 10025 U.S.A.
Telephone (212) 864-6588

“For Human Rights and Humanitarian Relief”

Founded in 1985, Western Sahara Campaign, U.S.A. is an organization devoted to monitoring human rights in war-torn Western Sahara and providing humanitarian relief to Sahrawi refugees. The Campaign promotes public understanding of the case of Western Sahara through research, publications and public education projects. It investigates and exposes human rights abuses in Western Sahara and communicates its findings to international human rights organizations. By breaking the silence on Western Sahara, the Campaign works to improve the lives of the Sahrawi people. Western Sahara Campaign provides humanitarian aid to Sahrawi refugees who are heavily dependent on external assistance.

The War in Western Sahara

Since 1975, a bitter and intractable war has been fought for control of what might seem to be one of the least hospitable territories on earth -- the former Spanish colony of Western Sahara, on the Atlantic coast of the great Sahara desert. There has only been sporadic coverage in the Western press of what has happened in this bleak, but phosphate-rich, patch of desert which covers 102,700 square miles, an area slightly larger than Great Britain. Yet the conflict raging there raises issues of great import to Africa and the world at large.

The war itself is a dispute over sovereignty -- between Western Saharans, or “Sahrawis”, and their powerful neighbor to the north, Morocco. However, the war has ramifications far beyond Western Sahara’s borders. It has strained relations between the countries of North-west Africa, while compounding Morocco’s grave economic difficulties.

At issue also is a principle which has been at the very heart of the contemporary law of decolonization -- the right of self-determination. For this war was spawned by the unjust and undemocratic manner of the territory’s ‘decolonization’. In effect, Western Sahara was simply ceded by Spain without reference to the wishes of its inhabitants, to its northern and southern neighbors, Morocco and Mauritania, which had longstanding territorial claims to the area. Western Sahara was then partitioned, from 1976 to 1979, when Mauritania tired of the conflict and renounced its territorial claims, prompting Morocco to annex the erstwhile Mauritanian sector, too.

The local population was never genuinely consulted about its future, despite the fact that the United Nations General Assembly had been urging Spain since 1966 to hold a referendum. If the Sahrawis had been given the right to decide their fate, there can be little doubt that in-



Sahrawi women attending adult education classes in the refugee camps.

dependence would be their choice -- and by a large majority, for a United Nations Mission of Inquiry which toured the country in May 1975 reported "an overwhelming consensus among the Saharans within the territory in favor of independence and opposing integration with any neighboring country". The UN Mission was also struck by the widespread support for the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y Río de Oro, the pro-independence movement commonly known by its acronym, Polisario, which had been founded two years earlier. The Sahrawi people have since named their country the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and it has been recognized by over sixty countries and by the Organization of African Unity.

The will to live free has since sustained the Sahrawis through their long and difficult war of resistance against Moroccan occupation. The Moroccan army has never succeeded in establishing a firm control over more than a small part of the territory, mainly in the North-west.

Human Rights Violations in Western Sahara

The war in Western Sahara has resulted in a steady deterioration of human rights in the territory occupied by Morocco. Sahrawis are not free to travel outside the towns occupied by Morocco. Their homes are routinely searched without a warrant. Sahrawis are barred from forming political associations. Freedom of expression is denied. No newspapers or literature on the Sahara is permitted in the territory. Sahrawis have fallen victim to a consistent pattern of arbitrary arrest and are tortured while in official custody. Sahrawis suspected of being independence-minded routinely disappear. And, the right to self-determination continues to elude the people of Western Sahara.

Relief For Western Sahara

Some 165,000 Sahrawi refugees are living in camps just across the border in the Tindouf region of Algeria. With the Moroccan army entrenched dangerously close to the refugee camps, the Sahrawi refugees are more vulnerable to attack than ever before. These refugees are living in one of the world's hottest and most inhospitable deserts. But, their camps are superbly organized and some self-supporting measures (vegetable gardens, schools, hospitals) have been instituted -- by the Sahrawis themselves. The Sahrawi refugees are nonetheless heavily dependent on external humanitarian aid.

The Sahrawi people need our help now, and Western Sahara Campaign (WSC) is an effective means of providing that help to them.

WSC has sent school books to the camps to help Sahrawi children play a constructive role when their country is free. WSC's Executive Director attended the annual Coordination Conference on Assistance to the Sahrawi People in Europe and visited the camps in order to assess the refugee needs.

WSC will devote most of its resources to direct assistance to Sahrawi refugees. WSC will coordinate this assistance with American humanitarian aid agencies and with WSC affiliates around the world.

Currently, milk, medicine, blankets and tents are desperately needed.

You can help by making a tax deductible contribution today.

Check where appropriate.

_____ I would like to make a tax deductible contribution to Western Sahara Campaign.

_____ I would like to join WSC. Enclosed is my \$15 membership fee.

_____ I would like my institution to affiliate with WSC. Enclosed is our \$50 membership fee.

_____ Please send a copy of WSC's literature list.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone(optional) _____



Western Sahara

How You Can Help

- * Join Western Sahara Campaign as a member and support our work.
- * Learn more about the Western Sahara through WSC's publications and newsletter.
- * Invite one of WSC's speakers to your organization, school or community.
- * Assist, with ideas and financial support, WSC's humanitarian relief projects for Sahrawi refugees.
- * Encourage your group to link efforts with WSC.
- * Discuss the work of WSC with friends and colleagues and suggest that they too join the campaign.

Western Sahara Campaign, U.S.A.

Founded in 1985, Western Sahara Campaign, U.S.A. monitors human rights in Western Sahara and provides humanitarian relief to Sahrawi refugees.

Contributions to Western Sahara Campaign, U.S.A. are tax deductible.

Membership and Fundraising

Western Sahara Campaign, U.S.A. depends on the generosity of its supporters -- its members, foundations, affiliates and public-spirited people who believe in human rights.

Annual membership fees are \$15 individual and \$50 for institutions. WSC's quarterly newsletter will be sent free of charge to all members.

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