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زبانهای اروپایی

By José Taboada Valdés  
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*Good luck, Staffan de Mistura*



Sources: CEAS Sahara

The UN Secretary-General's new Special Envoy for Western Sahara, **Staffan de Mistura**, has travelled for the first time to a region that is at war between Morocco and the Polisario Front since late 2020. It is necessary to maintain the hope that its mission will succeed and contribute to a peaceful, just and final solution.

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There is no doubt that international legality recognizes and guarantees the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara to democratically decide their future. Since 1966 - resolution 2229 (XXI) 20 December - so far, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Decolonization Commission have recognized that right in countless resolutions. They have also repeatedly called for a referendum to be organised to make it possible to exercise this right recognised by the Hague Court of Justice in 1975.

On the basis of this recognition, why has the United Nations been unable to implement the existing legislation? Seven UN secretaries-general have gone through the open conflict and none have managed to channel a solution. All its special envoys have resigned shortly after, given the impossibility of resolving the conflict. It was thought that, with the participation of James Baker, former US Secretary of State, a peaceful and just solution could be sought. Baker got Morocco and the Polisario Front to reach an agreement on voter identification by making complementary efforts that resulted in a Settlement Plan that determined a referendum after a five-year transition period. The Security Council approved it and the Polisario Front accepted it. However, in an April 2004 letter addressed to the UN Secretary-General, Morocco officially announced that it was unilaterally declaring its sovereignty over Western Sahara considering that "*a referendum including the option of independence constitutes a questioning of Morocco's sovereignty over the Sahara.*". This claim to sovereignty, which has been camouflaged since 2006 with the so-called autonomy proposal, is not recognized by the international community and its inconsistency has been underlined by the various resolutions of the Security Council.

Beginning in 2004, Morocco decided to undermine the peace process and oppose the decolonizing efforts of the United Nations. Proof of this is the last speech given by the King of Morocco, on the occasion of the anniversary of the invasion of Western Sahara: "*The Sahara will remain in Morocco and Morocco in the Sahara until the end of time ...*" On the other hand, the Secretary General of the Polisario Front and President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Brahim Ghali, declared that "*the Saharawi people have taken the sovereign decision to intensify their just war of liberation for all legitimate means and, in the first place, the armed struggle, until the establishment of the sovereignty of the Saharawi Republic over the whole of its territory*".

So far, the main problem has been and is the lack of clear and forceful will of the Security Council to implement its resolutions, not the scarcity of innovative or imaginative resolutions. The failure of Antonio Guterres, the former Secretaries-General of the United Nations and their various special envoys (James Baker, Alvaro de Soto, Peter Van Walson, Christopher Ross, Horst Köhler) is outrageous. They all tried, but they always failed and clashed with Morocco's "friendly" countries in the Security Council, which threaten to veto any resolution that might impose a democratic solution on Morocco.

We trust, however, that Staffan de Mistura, after knowing the occupied territory in situ, and seeing with his own eyes the brutal violation of human rights every day, will try once again, with all his strength, to help put an end to a conflict that already lasts too long and to find a solution in accordance with international legality for the last colony of Africa. It is a difficult mission, but fair and necessary.

Luck Mulana Staffan

*José Taboada Valdés. Honorary President of CEAS-Sahara*

Source: <https://ceas-sahara.es/buena-suerte-staffan-de-mistura/>

Rebellion 22.01.2022