



Security Council

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Situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2756 \(2024\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 October 2025 and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the situation in Western Sahara before the end of the mandate period. The report covers developments that occurred since the issuance of the previous report of 1 October 2024 ([S/2024/707](#)) and describes the situation on the ground, the status of the political process on Western Sahara, the implementation of resolution [2756 \(2024\)](#) and the existing challenges to the Mission's operations and steps taken to address them.

II. Recent developments

2. The situation in Western Sahara continued to be characterized by tensions and low-intensity hostilities between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO). Renewed international engagement contributed to efforts of the United Nations to make progress in the political process led by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Staffan de Mistura, as the conflict reached its fiftieth year.

A. Main developments

3. On 4 October 2024, the Court of Justice of the European Union issued two judgments in which it confirmed a previous similar General Court decision in 2021 and found that the fisheries and agriculture trade agreements made between the European Union and Morocco in 2019 were unlawfully concluded by the European Union. The Court considered that the people of Western Sahara had not consented to the agreements, which were thus concluded in breach of the principles of self-determination and of the relative effect of treaties.

4. In a statement issued the same day by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Morocco indicated that it “does not consider itself in any way concerned by the decision”, which it deemed to contain “legal errors and suspicious errors of fact”. Also on the same day, Frente POLISARIO issued a statement welcoming the reaffirmation by the



Court of “the separate and distinct status of Western Sahara” and the Sahrawi people as “a third party in [European Union]-Morocco relations, whose consent is indispensable”.

5. On 31 October, in a statement welcoming the adoption by the Security Council of resolution [2756 \(2024\)](#), the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of Morocco, Nasser Bourita, underlined the “growing support of permanent members of the Security Council and influential countries for Morocco’s sovereignty over the Sahara and the Moroccan Autonomy Initiative”. On the same day, Frente POLISARIO asserted in a press release that the United Nations-Organization of African Unity settlement plan was “the only reference framework for [a] solution that has been solemnly accepted by both parties”.

6. On 6 November, King Mohammed VI delivered a speech commemorating the forty-ninth anniversary of the Green March in which he praised “the broad support the Autonomy Initiative has been receiving”. On 7 November, in an official statement, Frente POLISARIO stated that the speech was “against international legitimacy and the resolutions of the United Nations and the African Union”.

7. On 26 February 2025, in a speech on the occasion of the forty-ninth anniversary of the proclamation of the “Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic”, the Secretary-General of Frente POLISARIO, Brahim Ghali, emphasized the “Sahrawi people’s determination to hold on to its rights, its land, and their right to self-defence, coupled with its legendary resilience over more than half a century”.

8. In a statement issued on 8 April 2025 during the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco to Washington, D.C., the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Marco Rubio, reiterated his Government’s recognition of “Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara”. He urged “the parties to engage in discussions without delay, using Morocco’s Autonomy Proposal as the only framework”, noting that the United States would “facilitate progress towards this aim”. On 9 April, Frente POLISARIO issued a statement expressing “deep regret” regarding the statement and reiterating its rejection of any solution “outside the framework of international legitimacy”.

9. In a joint communiqué issued on 1 June 2025 by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Morocco, the United Kingdom stated that it considered the Moroccan autonomy plan to be “the most credible, viable and pragmatic basis for a lasting resolution of the dispute” and expressed its readiness to “lend its active support and engagement to the Personal Envoy and the parties” to reach a solution. In a statement issued the same day, the “Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic” expressed “its deep regret and disappointment” regarding the communiqué, while noting that the United Kingdom had not recognized Moroccan sovereignty over the Territory. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Algeria also issued a statement regretting the “choice made by the United Kingdom to support the Moroccan autonomy plan”.

10. In a letter to the Secretary-General on 1 July, the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations provided details of initiatives by Morocco to promote socioeconomic development west of the berm, including improvements to infrastructure and basic services, such as drinking water, roads, electricity, health and education. Morocco also continued to host diplomatic, cultural and sports events in the Territory. According to a national census conducted by Moroccan authorities in September 2024 that included the Territory west of the berm, the population of that part of the Territory had increased from approximately 450,000 to 600,000 since the previous survey in 2014.

11. In his annual speech for Throne Day on 29 July, King Mohammed VI stated that he “keenly look[ed] forward ... to finding a consensual solution – a solution with

neither winner nor loser; a face-saving solution for all parties”. In the speech, he also expressed his country’s readiness to address the relationship with Algeria in “frank, responsible, fraternal and sincere dialogue”. In a statement on 30 July, Frente POLISARIO considered that the “consensual solution” to the conflict was “a democratic solution, in accordance with international law, which recognizes the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination and independence”.

12. In a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations dated 20 August, the Secretary-General of Frente POLISARIO, recalling the judgments by the Court of Justice of the European Union (see para. 3), stated that economic activities carried out by Morocco in the Territory were “unlawful”. He described such activities as “undermining the exercise by the Sahrawi people of their right to freedom, self-determination and independence”.

B. Situation on the ground

13. MINURSO continued to receive reports of alleged shootings by Frente POLISARIO towards units of the Royal Moroccan Army at or near the berm and of strikes allegedly conducted by uncrewed aerial vehicles of the Army east of the berm.

14. Most firing incidents west of the berm reported to MINURSO by the parties continued to be concentrated in the northern region, near Mahbas. MINURSO was not able to directly confirm the number and location of over half of the reported firing incidents, and their impact remained the subject of divergent claims by the parties. At the request of the Royal Moroccan Army and with the Army’s escort, MINURSO continued to visit sites adjacent to the berm where incidents were alleged to have taken place, and in most cases MINURSO observed traces of exploded mortar and artillery ammunition. Most of the shots verified by MINURSO landed in remote areas, causing no significant damage.

15. On 9 November 2024, one firing incident took place in the town of Mahbas near an area hosting civilian commemorations of the forty-ninth anniversary of the Green March. No casualties were reported. On 11 November, MINURSO investigated the incident location and observed the debris of four rockets 800 m away from the local market, approximately 350 m from a Royal Moroccan Army unit. In a letter to the Secretary-General on 12 November, the Permanent Representative of Morocco stated that Morocco “reserves the right to take all measures and actions it deems appropriate in order to put an end to these threats and aggressions targeting its ... territorial integrity ... in full compliance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations”.

16. On 6 April 2025, a 155-mm projectile fired by the Royal Moroccan Army landed approximately 2 km from the operational site of a MINURSO mine action implementing partner in Tifariti. No casualties or damage to property occurred. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO and the MINURSO Force Commander contacted the Moroccan Coordinator and the Commander of the Royal Moroccan Army southern zone to express concern and to call upon the Army to refrain from firing in the vicinity of ongoing MINURSO activities, respectively. On 7 April, the Royal Moroccan Army responded, renewing security assurances for “all MINURSO personnel” and indicating that additional instructions were issued to Army liaison officers to coordinate activities with MINURSO team sites.

17. On 27 June, four rocket fire explosions occurred near the MINURSO team site in Smara. One of the explosions was approximately 200 m from the team site. While there were no casualties, this was the closest incident to a MINURSO facility since the resumption of hostilities in 2020. MINURSO determined that four 122-mm high-

explosive rockets had been launched from approximately 40 km from the direction of east of the berm.

18. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Force Commander sent separate letters to Frente POLISARIO to express deep concern about the incident and to reiterate a call for a cessation of hostilities. On 28 June, the Frente POLISARIO Coordinator with MINURSO responded, renewing assurances of the Frente POLISARIO “commitment to the safety and security of MINURSO military observers and personnel”, while neither confirming nor denying responsibility for the incident. Also on 28 June, the Commander of the Royal Moroccan Army southern zone wrote to the MINURSO Force Commander referring to the incident as “a criminal and terrorist act by [Frente POLISARIO] militias”.

19. MINURSO also continued to investigate alleged aerial and other strikes at locations east of the berm, in coordination with Frente POLISARIO and through the expert assistance of the Mine Action Service. Two of the strikes investigated caused civilian casualties, while all of them caused material damage.

20. On 15 October 2024, MINURSO investigated one artillery strike by the Royal Moroccan Army in the Mijek area and was informed by local witnesses that three deaths had occurred, two Mauritanian and one Sudanese, all of whom were reportedly artisanal gold miners. On 16 May 2025, MINURSO investigated one uncrewed aerial vehicle strike in the Mijek area, observing the destruction of one vehicle and being told by local witnesses that two deaths had occurred among artisanal gold miners from Mauritania. MINURSO investigated eight additional sites where uncrewed aerial vehicle strikes had occurred. On each occasion, MINURSO observed that vehicles had been damaged and was informed by local witnesses that no deaths had occurred.

21. During the reporting period, local media sources reported nine additional uncrewed aerial vehicle strikes against the Frente POLISARIO military, claiming a total of 28 casualties, 21 deaths and 7 injuries. Most of the reported uncrewed aerial vehicle strikes were in the south-eastern region, near Mijek, where artisanal mining also takes place. MINURSO was not given permission by Frente POLISARIO to investigate any of the alleged incidents. In March and May 2025, representatives of the Government of Mauritania issued public statements calling upon its citizens to avoid “gold exploration outside the country’s borders ... due to the risk it could entail for their lives”.

22. In a letter to the Special Representative on 18 June 2025, the Frente POLISARIO Representative in New York and Coordinator with MINURSO stated that “indications suggest that the Moroccan [armed forces] are also using internationally banned thermobaric weapons” in an “act of aggression against the Sahrawi people”. For his part, the Permanent Representative of Morocco, in a letter to the Secretary-General dated 9 July, indicated that “the presence of [armed] elements of [Frente POLISARIO] has been confirmed” at artisanal mining sites east of the berm and stated that Frente POLISARIO was “convey[ing] that these sites are exclusively for civilians”.

23. Between January and March 2025, MINURSO observed that Morocco had completed the construction of a road that had not yet officially opened, approximately 93 km in length and leading from the city of Smara to Mauritania across the berm. The road would provide a second additional crossing from the Territory into Mauritania, along with Guerguerat. In a meeting with the MINURSO Force Commander in Agadir on 19 February, the Commander of the southern zone of the Royal Moroccan Army stated that the road was meant for civilian use and unrelated to its operations.

III. Update on the political process

24. During the reporting period, the Personal Envoy continued consultations on the issue of Western Sahara with Morocco, Frente POLISARIO, Algeria, Mauritania, members of the Security Council, members of the Group of Friends on Western Sahara and other interested actors with a view to constructively advancing the political process.

25. In 2024, the Personal Envoy engaged with regional actors, including the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Morocco, Mauritania and Algeria, in New York on the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly in September, and with the leadership of Frente POLISARIO in Rabouni on 3 October.

26. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco insisted that autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty remained the “end game, not the starting point of the process”. In his view, the 2007 Moroccan autonomy initiative should be the framework for negotiations, with the participation of Frente POLISARIO, Algeria and Mauritania in addition to Morocco. The Personal Envoy reminded him of the Security Council’s call upon all parties in its resolution [2703 \(2023\)](#) to expand on their positions and to avoid preconditions.

27. The Secretary-General of Frente POLISARIO reaffirmed that the provisions of the Charter and international law concerning self-determination needed to be applied fully and that the people of Western Sahara should be able to decide their own future and that of the Territory in a manner that no other stakeholder should pre-empt. The Personal Envoy recalled the Security Council’s strong encouragement for all to engage “in a spirit of realism and compromise” (see resolution [2703 \(2023\)](#)).

28. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, National Community Abroad and African Affairs of Algeria, Ahmed Attaf, continued to support the positions expressed by Frente POLISARIO, while insisting that his country did not consider itself a party to the conflict. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Mauritians Abroad of Mauritania, Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug, reaffirmed his Government’s stance of positive neutrality.

29. In 2025, the Personal Envoy continued his engagements with all concerned. He travelled to Rabat on 24 March for a meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco; to Nouakchott on 3 April for meetings with the President of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould El-Ghazouani, and its Minister for Foreign Affairs; to Rabouni on 5 April for a meeting with the Secretary-General of Frente POLISARIO; and to Algiers on 14 January and 6 April for meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria. The Personal Envoy conducted further consultations in Brussels with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Algeria and Mauritania on 20 May and with representatives of Frente POLISARIO on 22 May. He met again with representatives of Frente POLISARIO in London on 5 August.

30. In March, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco assured the Personal Envoy of the value that his Government attached to the United Nations process on Western Sahara, highlighting the legitimacy that only the Organization could confer to a solution. The Personal Envoy reiterated that it would be important for Morocco to engage in in-depth discussions with all concerned about the options that had been proposed by the parties.

31. The Secretary-General of Frente POLISARIO indicated the readiness of Frente POLISARIO to engage in bilateral discussions with Morocco facilitated by the United Nations. During the meeting, the Personal Envoy took the opportunity to remind him of the importance that the Organization attached to a ceasefire being reinstated.

32. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria reiterated his Government's continued support for direct talks between Morocco and Frente POLISARIO under the aegis of the United Nations, with the presence of Algeria and Mauritania. The President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mauritania remained concerned that the regional situation should not be destabilized further and stated their readiness to continue to support the political process.

33. In September, the Personal Envoy undertook consultations with all concerned ahead of his biannual briefing to the Security Council in October. On 16 and 24 September he met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria; on 21 September he met with the Secretary-General of Frente POLISARIO; on 22 September he met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco; and on 24 September he met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mauritania. These meetings took place in the region and on the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly in New York.

34. The Personal Envoy also continued consultations with a broad range of international interlocutors, including the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of the United Kingdom on 18 September 2024 and 5 August 2025 and other senior British officials on 1 April 2025 in London; the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Jean-Noël Barrot, on 11 September 2025 and senior French officials in Paris on 20 September 2024; senior Italian officials in Rome on 25 February and 20 June 2025; the Slovenian State Secretary for Multilateral Affairs in Ljubljana on 5 March; the Acting Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs of the United States of America in Washington, D.C., on 10 April and the Senior Adviser to the President for Africa, Massad Boulos, on 5 September 2025; and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Vershinin, in Moscow on 18 September. In these meetings and interactions, the Personal Envoy's interlocutors expressed appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations to facilitate a political settlement to the issue of Western Sahara.

35. In accordance with resolutions [2703 \(2023\)](#) and [2756 \(2024\)](#), the Personal Envoy briefed the Security Council, in closed consultations, on 16 October 2024 and 14 April 2025. On both occasions, he received broad support from members of the Council for his efforts. While in New York, the Personal Envoy met with representatives of Morocco, Frente POLISARIO, Algeria, Mauritania and Council members, as well as senior United Nations officials.

IV. Activities of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

A. Operational activities

36. As at 31 August 2025, the military component of MINURSO consisted of 150 military personnel, of whom 38 were women. MINURSO continued to pursue efforts to improve gender parity, with women representing 20 per cent of the military observers and 30 per cent of the medical contingent provided by Bangladesh.

37. From 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025, MINURSO conducted ground patrols covering approximately 364,440 km.

38. West of the berm, MINURSO conducted 7,723 visits to the headquarters, units, subunits, strong points and observation posts of the Royal Moroccan Army. Morocco continued to advise United Nations military observers not to visit forward units without an Army escort due to safety and security concerns. MINURSO continued patrolling in selected areas along the berm where no exchanges of fire were reported by the parties.

39. Between 1 September 2024 and 31 August 2025, the Mission conducted 141 aerial reconnaissance flights west of the berm. Owing to safety and security concerns, those flights continued to operate at minimum distances of 5 km from the berm.

40. Between 1 September 2024 and 31 August 2025, the Royal Moroccan Army reported to MINURSO 142 incidents involving firing from a distance against its units at or near the berm, approximately 50 per cent of which were concentrated in the Mahbas area. During the same period, MINURSO conducted 58 investigation patrols, visiting a total of 354 reported impact sites. MINURSO did not investigate other incidents, as the impact points either could not be identified or were in the buffer strip east of the berm.

41. East of the berm, MINURSO continued to conduct ground patrols twice per week, accompanied by Frente POLISARIO. Frente POLISARIO continued to restrict MINURSO ground patrol movements to a 20-km distance from each team site. In Tifariti and Mijek, MINURSO ground patrols were further limited to specific approved routes. Frente POLISARIO has not permitted MINURSO helicopter reconnaissance flights east of the berm since November 2020.

42. During the reporting period, MINURSO continued strengthening coordination and cooperation with the Royal Moroccan Army. It conducted four visits to the headquarters of the southern zone of the Army in Agadir in November 2024 and February and May 2025. At the working level, the MINURSO military component held five meetings with Royal Moroccan Army counterparts, including one in Laayoune in February, two in Dakhla in October 2024 and February 2025 and two in Guelmim in November 2024 and February 2025.

43. The MINURSO Force Commander remained unable to establish direct contact with the military leadership of Frente POLISARIO, and all communications continued to be conducted through written correspondence. At the level of team sites east of the berm and in Rabouni, near Tindouf, Algeria, in-person interactions continued to take place with the Frente POLISARIO liaison officers. Seven liaison meetings between MINURSO team site commanders and the Frente POLISARIO military regional commanders and deputy commanders took place east of the berm.

44. During the reporting period, MINURSO continued to observe uncrewed aerial vehicles at the Smara airport and received information from open sources and local contacts concerning 18 alleged aerial strikes conducted by uncrewed aerial vehicles of the Royal Moroccan Army east of the berm. On each occasion that a strike was reported, MINURSO liaised with the parties to request additional information and to receive security assurance to conduct an investigation of the site of the reported incidents. On nine occasions, after receiving security assurances from the Royal Moroccan Army and Frente POLISARIO, MINURSO was able to visit the sites of the reported incidents and conduct an investigation. MINURSO was unable to investigate nine separate alleged incidents due to Frente POLISARIO either denying or not confirming those incidents.

45. On 10 March and 8 May 2025, the Royal Moroccan Army presented requests to the MINURSO team sites in Oum Dreyga and Mahbas to construct 92 and 54 shelters, respectively, intended to provide accommodation for its military personnel; both requests were approved.

B. Mine action

46. The Mine Action Service of MINURSO continued to conduct demining activities east of the berm since their full resumption in 2024 ([S/2024/707](#), para. 46), including emergency disposal of explosive ordnance, route verification and explosive

ordnance risk education to MINURSO military observers, as well as assistance to MINURSO investigation patrols at sites of alleged aerial and artillery strikes and support to MINURSO ground convoy movements, east of the berm. A standby mine action emergency response team managed landmine- and explosive ordnance-related incidents and accidents.

47. From 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025, the two Mine Action Service demining teams conducted 1,050 missions to ensure the safe movement of MINURSO civilian and military personnel and logistical convoys and to provide technical expertise during the investigation of uncrewed aerial vehicle strikes. As at 31 August, the teams had assessed 13,816 km of routes between various team sites east of the berm as free from visible explosive ordnance. The Mine Action Service also verified as free from explosive hazards the 728 km of routes used by MINURSO investigation teams to visit the sites of alleged aerial and artillery strikes, as well as the surrounding areas. The Mine Action Service also carried out minefield clearance alongside non-technical survey activities and successfully cleared 1,415,164 m² of land.

48. As at 31 August, 24 out of 67 known minefields and 34 out of 541 recorded cluster strike areas had yet to be cleared from explosive ordnance hazards east of the berm. Since 1 September, the Mine Action Service had located and destroyed 1 anti-personnel mine, 12 anti-vehicle mines, 247 cluster munitions and 35 pieces of explosive ordnance.

49. During the reporting period, the Mine Action Service surveyed and confirmed three minefields in Bir Lahlou and two cluster strike areas in Mijek, estimated to date between 1975 and 1991. One of the minefields is located approximately 20 km from the MINURSO team site.

50. From 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025, the Royal Moroccan Army informed MINURSO that it had cleared nearly 129 million m² of land west of the berm of explosive ordnance hazards and had destroyed 34 anti-personnel mines, 60 anti-tank mines and 475 pieces of explosive ordnance.

51. The Mine Action Service continued to maintain close coordination and cooperation with Frente POLISARIO through the Sahrawi Mine Action Coordination Office.

52. The Royal Moroccan Army reported three explosive hazard accidents west of the berm, which caused three civilian injuries.

C. Security

53. MINURSO continued to conduct its observation activities in an operational context marked by ongoing low-intensity hostilities. The presence of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war remained a serious concern and a threat to United Nations personnel and assets. The occurrence of firing incidents in the vicinity of MINURSO team sites also remained a cause for concern (see paras. 15 and 16). MINURSO continued to review and adjust its security posture at team sites against such incidents.

54. Morocco and Frente POLISARIO retained primary responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel, assets and resources west and east of the berm, respectively. MINURSO continued to have confidence in both parties' commitment and capability in that regard.

D. Substantive civilian activities

55. MINURSO continued to monitor, analyse and report on developments in and affecting Western Sahara. The Mission's liaison office in Tindouf followed developments in and around the Sahrawi refugee camps. MINURSO continued to rely on the Situational Awareness Geospatial Enterprise database and the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System to enhance its situational awareness and its ability to successfully complete its operational tasks.

56. In addition to regular meetings with the Moroccan Coordinator in Laayoune and Rabat, the Special Representative met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco in Rabat on 6 May 2025. In October 2024 and April 2025, the Special Representative met with the Frente POLISARIO Coordinator in New York.

57. Representatives of some Member States continued to visit MINURSO offices in Laayoune and Tindouf, as well as MINURSO team sites west of the berm. The Special Representative also continued to provide regular briefings to Member States in Rabat and New York.

E. Challenges to the operations of the Mission

58. East of the berm, MINURSO was able to conduct regular resupply and cargo flights and, on average, one ground convoy per month. While the latter remained subject to prior authorization from Frente POLISARIO on a "provisional and exceptional" basis, the sustainability of the MINURSO team sites in that part of the Territory was fully maintained. Installation of a hybrid solar energy generation system was completed in Bir Lahlou, east of the berm, further reducing the Mission's reliance on fossil fuel for electricity generation, with six of nine team sites now fully equipped with solar systems.

59. The Mission's lack of access to local interlocutors west of the berm continued to severely limit its ability to collect reliable situational awareness information and to assess and report on developments across its area of responsibility.

60. The Special Representative and the MINURSO Force Commander remained unable to meet with Frente POLISARIO in Rabouni, contrary to what had been previously established practice.

61. The general perception among the population of the Mission's impartiality continued to be affected by the requirement of Morocco that MINURSO use Moroccan vehicle number plates west of the berm, in contravention of the status-of-mission agreement. This pending issue, together with the stamping of MINURSO passports by Morocco in Western Sahara, continued to be the subject of objections from Frente POLISARIO.

62. The increasing unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for MINURSO led to a reduced deployment of MINURSO military observers, to 149 out of the approved strength of 218, affecting the number of ground patrols and other activities conducted by the Mission.

V. Humanitarian activities and human rights

A. Persons unaccounted for in the conflict

63. The question of persons who are still unaccounted for in relation to past hostilities continued to be a major humanitarian concern. The International

Committee of the Red Cross remained ready to act as a neutral intermediary between the parties and play an advisory role on the issue.

B. Assistance for the protection of Western Saharan refugees

64. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), with support from the Resident Coordinator Office, continued to provide humanitarian assistance to Sahrawi refugees in the five camps near Tindouf.

65. The first consolidated plan of needs and activities in the camps, the Sahrawi Refugee Response Plan 2024–2025, is in its second year of implementation. As at the end of July 2025, approximately \$36.16 million of the nearly \$104 million appealed for had been received, including generous support from the Government of Algeria. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes continued efforts to support fundraising for the Sahrawi Refugee Response Plan, including outreach to potential new donors, both States and the private sector. A new Sahrawi Refugee Response Plan is under preparation for 2026–2027.

66. Preliminary findings from a standardized expanded nutrition survey conducted in May 2025 in the camps indicated a serious deterioration in the nutritional status of the camp population, particularly among children and women of childbearing age. Global acute malnutrition and stunting in children have steadily increased, reaching 13.6 per cent and 30.7 per cent, respectively, compared with the last round of 2022, which indicated 10.7 per cent and 28.8 per cent. The anaemia prevalence remains significantly high and surpasses the 40 per cent public health significance threshold among women of reproductive age, at 68.8 per cent, and children under 5 years, at 65.3 per cent. These results indicate a significant deterioration compared with the 2022 survey, which recorded high levels of anaemia in both individual categories, at 53.5 per cent and 54.2 per cent, respectively. These results raised the concern of a potential nutrition emergency in one of the world's most protracted displacement situations. UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP designed a five-year multisectoral and holistic nutrition strategy to tackle undernutrition (stunting, wasting and underweight), anaemia and overnutrition (overweight and obesity) in the camps for five years.

67. In partnership with the Algerian Red Crescent and UNHCR, WFP continued to provide food assistance to address the approximately 80 per cent of the Sahrawi population who are food-insecure. The 2024 Food Security Assessment found a worsening situation in the camps. Humanitarian assistance did not fully meet the needs of households due to rising market prices and inconsistent supply, which reduced the purchasing power of self-reliant households, alongside funding reductions. WFP began discussions with the Government of Algeria on the possibility of locally procuring food commodities at a negotiated, government-approved price, to enable the purchase of larger volumes within the same budget.

C. Confidence-building measures

68. The confidence-building measures, pursuant to Security Council resolution [1282 \(1999\)](#) and subsequent resolutions, to allow family links between Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps and their communities of origin in Western Sahara remained on hold. The Personal Envoy continued to take note that neither Morocco nor Frente POLISARIO had expressed immediate interest in further work on these issues.

D. Human rights

69. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has not been granted access to the Territory since 2015 despite repeated requests and although the Security Council, most recently in its resolution 2756 (2024), strongly urged enhancing cooperation with OHCHR, including through facilitating visits to the region. The lack of independent, impartial, comprehensive and sustained human rights monitoring remained detrimental to a comprehensive assessment of the human rights situation on the ground. International observers, including parliamentarians, lawyers and journalists, reportedly continued to face entry restrictions, with dozens denied entry or expelled.

70. During the reporting period, OHCHR continued to receive reports of an increasingly shrinking civic space and restrictions on Sahrawis' rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly amid growing surveillance, harassment and intimidation.¹ Moroccan authorities reportedly suppressed protests and gatherings supporting self-determination, with a particularly notable impact on Sahrawi women human rights defenders.

71. On 20 March 2025, United Nations special procedure mandate holders sent a communication to Morocco expressing concerns over violations affecting 79 Sahrawi activists.² It also cited human rights abuses linked to coastal development projects that entail large-scale land acquisition, destruction of private property and displacement.³ Morocco denied the allegations in May 2025.⁴

72. The dire conditions of detention of Sahrawi prisoners remained a serious concern. Reported human rights violations against the Gdeim Izik prisoners, who remained held in prisons outside Western Sahara, continued to adversely affect their physical and mental health. The imprisonment of Sahrawis inside Morocco undermined family visits. In November 2024, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention noted that no action had been taken by the Government of Morocco to implement its opinion 23/2023 and highlighted deteriorating conditions of detention, including isolation, lack of contact with their families and restricted access to medical care.⁵ OHCHR received reports of similar violations against other Sahrawi detainees, including discriminatory treatment by prison authorities. At least one death in custody was reported.

73. Following the judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union in October 2024⁶ (see para. 3), OHCHR received reports indicating that the Sahrawi population does not benefit from the exploitation by Morocco of natural resources in the Territory and stating that this is inconsistent with the principle of self-determination applicable to the people of Western Sahara. This has reportedly perpetuated the population's economic marginalization and prompted Sahrawi youth to flee Western Sahara in search of better opportunities. Separately, OHCHR received information highlighting the continued precarious living conditions, including food insecurity, in the Tindouf camps, and the need to ensure the protection of human rights of Sahrawi refugees.

¹ See for example communication MAR 2/2024 and response and MAR 1/2025 and response. All communications mentioned in the present report are available from <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>.

² Communication MAR 3/2025.

³ Ibid., p. 9.

⁴ See response of Morocco to communication MAR 3/2025.

⁵ See A/HRC/57/44.

⁶ Judgments of the Court in Joined Cases C-778/21 P and C-798/21 P, and in Joined Cases C-779/21 P and C-799/21 P, 4 October 2024.

74. In a note verbale to OHCHR dated 26 June 2025, Morocco provided information relating to its cooperation with human rights mechanisms; measures taken to ensure the enjoyment of civil and political rights; and economic, social and cultural development. Morocco also reported on alleged human rights violations in the Tindouf camps.⁷

75. On 2 July 2025, the National Human Rights Council of Morocco shared information concerning its capacity-building activities, complaints handling, case referral and mediation in Western Sahara. It also referred to its visits to detention facilities and interventions that reportedly resulted in improvements in detention conditions.

VI. Financial aspects

76. The General Assembly, by its resolution [79/310](#) of 30 June 2025, appropriated the amount of \$70.7 million for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, inclusive of the voluntary contribution in kind in the amount of \$0.5 million.

77. As at 20 August 2025, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for MINURSO amounted to \$64.9 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$3,855.4 million.

78. Reimbursement of troop costs has been made for the period up to 31 March 2025 and for contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 September 2024.

79. The financial situation is increasingly affecting the ability of the Mission to sustain mandate implementation, as well as its presence throughout the Territory.

VII. Observations and recommendations

80. I remain deeply concerned by the situation in Western Sahara and the entrenched circumstances on the ground that continue to impede progress towards a political solution to the conflict. The fiftieth anniversary of the conflict, which falls in November 2025, highlights the prolonged alarming state of affairs but also calls for a renewed effort for an accelerated resolution of this long-standing conflict. It is urgent to reverse the stalemate, for the sake of the people of Western Sahara and their aspirations, and with a view to preserving stability and fostering development in the region and beyond.

81. I strongly urge all concerned to engage without delay in support of United Nations facilitation, in order to change the course of the process towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in accordance with Security Council resolutions [2440 \(2018\)](#), [2468 \(2019\)](#), [2494 \(2019\)](#), [2548 \(2020\)](#), [2602 \(2021\)](#), [2654 \(2022\)](#), [2703 \(2023\)](#) and [2756 \(2024\)](#).

82. Nearly five years have elapsed since the resumption of hostilities, which continues to pose an increasing risk of escalation and to detract from stability and prosperity in the broader Maghreb region. Furthermore, I am concerned at the increased occurrence of incidents in or near civilian areas and activities, and in the immediate vicinity of MINURSO premises or in areas in which the Mission conducts its operations. In this context, it is critical for all hostilities to cease immediately and

⁷ Most of the incidents referred to in the note verbale are outside the reporting period.

for a ceasefire to be fully re-established, and for every effort to be applied to safeguard the security and safety of MINURSO personnel and team sites.

83. Neighbouring States have a crucial role to play for the achievement of a solution to the question of Western Sahara, which would furthermore benefit their security and development prospects. I continue to regret that there has been no concrete improvement in the relations between Algeria and Morocco, and I encourage them to renew efforts aimed at regional cooperation.

84. I welcome the improvement in the operational environment of MINURSO, including with regard to the maintenance of its logistics and resupply chain. I urge all remaining restrictions to be lifted to enable the Mission to fully implement its tasks, and reiterate my call for unhindered freedom of movement in line with the request by the Security Council in its resolution [2756 \(2024\)](#). It is vital that the Royal Moroccan Army refrain from building further military infrastructure west of the berm and from conducting military activities that have an impact on civilians or take place near MINURSO premises east of the berm. It is equally important that Frente POLISARIO exercise all precautions to avoid incidents in the vicinity of civilian urban areas or MINURSO premises. I further urge Frente POLISARIO to remove all remaining restrictions on MINURSO east of the berm, including on its helicopter reconnaissance flights, and to resume regular, in-person contacts with MINURSO leadership, both civilian and military, in Rabouni, in line with previously established practice.

85. I am pleased that MINURSO humanitarian demining activities have continued without limitations. Mine action operations remain essential to enable the MINURSO military observers to conduct their monitoring activities safely. I am grateful to the parties for their continued cooperation with MINURSO in this regard.

86. The humanitarian situation in the Sahrawi refugee camps near Tindouf remains dire. After 50 years of displacement, the Sahrawi refugees are still dependent on humanitarian aid. Opportunities for self-reliance remain limited due to the harsh climatic conditions of the Sahara Desert and the lack of funding in the context of the global humanitarian funding crisis. This protracted and underfunded operation leaves many Sahrawis, especially women and children, very prone to malnutrition and highly vulnerable. I reiterate my call upon donors to increase their contributions to the current and upcoming Sahrawi Refugee Response Plan.

87. I remain concerned about the continued lack of OHCHR access to the Territory. I again call upon the parties to respect, protect and promote the human rights of all people in Western Sahara, including by addressing outstanding human rights issues, ensuring access to justice and accountability for human rights violations and increasing their cooperation with OHCHR and the United Nations human rights mechanisms, and to facilitate their monitoring missions. Independent, impartial, comprehensive and sustained monitoring of the human rights situation remains necessary to ensure the protection of all people in Western Sahara.

88. I would like to express my appreciation to the Mission's troop-contributing countries for their support to efforts by MINURSO to achieve gender balance among its military observers, in line with the objectives of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. I remain convinced that the increased participation of women in peacekeeping improves the performance of United Nations peace operations and strengthens their effectiveness.

89. In a context of shrinking global resources, the presence of MINURSO some 34 years since its establishment represents the continued commitment of the United Nations and the international community to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the conflict in Western Sahara in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Through its presence on the ground and its

monitoring, investigating and liaison with the parties, the Mission plays an important role in preventing further escalation and a potential regional spillover. It is the main and often sole source of impartial information and advice to me, the Security Council, Member States and the Secretariat concerning developments in and related to the Territory; and it continues to fulfil that role despite the significant challenges it faces. The Mission's stabilizing presence also contributes to a propitious environment for the political process led by my Personal Envoy. It is important in this respect that the Mission continue its work and remain fully funded by Member States in line with the resources approved by the General Assembly. I therefore recommend that the Council extend the mandate of MINURSO for another year, until 31 October 2026.

90. I commend my Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Staffan de Mistura, for his continuing efforts. I also thank my Special Representative for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO, Alexander Ivanko, as well as the MINURSO Force Commander, Major General Md Fakhru Ahsan, for their dedicated leadership of MINURSO. Lastly, I thank the women and men of MINURSO for their continued commitment, under difficult and challenging circumstances, to fulfilling the Mission's mandate.

Annex

**United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
military and police strength as at 26 August 2025**

Country	Military component				Civilian police
	Experts on mission	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Individual police officers
Argentina	3	—	—	3	—
Austria	3	—	—	3	—
Bangladesh	9	—	20	29 ^a	—
Bhutan	—	—	—	—	—
Brazil	7	—	—	7	—
Chad	3	—	—	3	—
China	9	—	—	9	—
Colombia	1	—	—	1	—
Côte d'Ivoire	1	—	—	1	—
Croatia	4	—	—	4	—
Djibouti	—	—	—	—	—
Ecuador	—	—	—	—	—
Egypt	13	—	—	13	—
El Salvador	1	—	—	1	—
France	2	—	—	2	—
Germany	4	—	—	4	—
Ghana	6	5	—	11	—
Guinea	4	—	—	4	—
Honduras	7	—	—	7	—
Hungary	7	—	—	7	—
India	2	—	—	2	—
Indonesia	3	—	—	3	1
Ireland	—	—	—	—	—
Italy	2	—	—	2	—
Jordan	—	—	—	—	1
Kazakhstan	2	—	—	2	—
Kyrgyzstan	—	—	—	—	—
Malawi	1	—	—	1	—
Malaysia	9	—	—	9	—
Mexico	5	—	—	5	—
Mongolia	4	—	—	4	—
Montenegro	—	—	—	—	—
Nepal	6	—	—	6	—
Nigeria	6	—	—	6	—
Pakistan	10	—	—	10	—
Poland	1	—	—	1	—
Republic of Korea	2	—	—	2	—
Russian Federation	6	—	—	6	—
Sierra Leone	—	—	—	—	—

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military component</i>				<i>Civilian police</i>
	<i>Experts on mission</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Individual police officers</i>
Sri Lanka	2	—	—	2	—
Sweden	—	—	—	—	—
Switzerland	2	—	—	2	—
Togo	1	—	—	1	—
United States of America	1	—	—	1	—
Total	149	5	20	174	2

^a Not including the Force Commander.

Map



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