



TV UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

U.N. IN ACTION

Week of 15 November 2004

Programme No. 931

Length: 2'53

WESTERN SAHARA: FAMILIES VISIT AFTER THIRTY YEARS APART

VIDEO

AUDIO

NARRATION

WIDE SMARRA REFUGEE CAMP

Five isolated camps in a remote corner of Algeria are home to 150,000 refugees from the disputed territory of Western Sahara. (9")

Now, for the first time in 30 years, the UN was able to organize family reunions. (6")

The refugees have lived here since the mid-70s when a conflict broke out over the right to govern Western Sahara. Their relatives stayed behind under Moroccan rule. (11")

UNHCR CAR

The UN refugee agency UNHCR is bringing exciting news to El Ghalia and her sister Aghbana.

They are among the lucky ones who have been selected to visit their parents on the other side of the border in Smarra town in Western Sahara. (14")

BOARDING AT TINDOUF

A few days later they board a special United

AIRPORT, ALGERIA

Nations plane to make the two-hour flight across the desert. (6")

OUTSIDE HOUSE IN SMARRA TOWN, WESTERN SAHARA

On a small side street in Smarra town Mohamed Fathil is waiting anxiously.

He only found out the night before that his daughters were coming to see him. And it is the first time he will ever meet five of his grandchildren. (13")

HUGGING – MEETING RELATIVES

It is an emotional encounter. El Ghalia and Aghbana can stay for five days, then they return to give others a chance to make the same journey.

So far more than 800 people have participated in the weekly flights and almost 18,000 are on the waiting list. (17")

PEOPLE BOARDING AT SMARRA AIRPORT, WESTERN SAHARA

Later in the day the UN plane returns to Algeria. This time it is carrying twenty-four people from Smarra town to visit relatives in the refugee camps. (10"0

EXTERIOR – PLANE TAKING OFF

When war broke out in 1975, the Al Moukhtar sisters and brother were away at school and became separated from their parents. They no longer remember what they look like but they never lost their love. (12")

HUGGING IN SMARRA CAMP,
SOUTHERN ALGERIA

Emotions are running high. Everybody has changed and decades of separation have left their marks.

A granddaughter meets her grandmother for the first time ever. (9")

WIDE/TENT/ BROTHER AND
FATHER WALKING OUT OF THE
HOUSE

The Al Moukhtar siblings had been worrying about the well being of their aging parents. They didn't know what to expect in the distant refugee camps. (8")

ESSALK AL MOUKHTAR: (In Arabic)

ESSALK AL MOUKHTAR ON
CAMERA

"We have missed our parents for almost 30 years and thanks to God we see them today and they are in good health and everything is alright". (11")

NARRATION

WIDE PICTURE OF THE AL
MOUKHTAR FAMILY

The UN refugee agency calls the family visits 'confidence building measures' and a humanitarian breakthrough in one of the world's long-forgotten conflicts. And perhaps these visits are a step on the long road to peace. (13")

UN LOGO (10")

This report was prepared by Ragnhild Elk and Richard Sydenham for the United Nations.