



# UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

## U.N. IN ACTION

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### CROSSING THE DIVIDE

#### VIDEO

DESERT SCENES

PROFILE OF EMBARIH

REFUGEE CAMP

INTRO OF ABOUHA

WOMEN WALK IN DESERT  
VILLAGE

MAP WITH WESTERN  
SAHARA HIGHLIGHTED

WEAPON

#### AUDIO

#### NARRATION

In Africa's Western Sahara – in a coastal town where the windswept dunes meet the ocean – lives a father, Emrabih Edriss. (10")

...in a refugee camp in Algeria, lives his daughter, Abouha. (5")

The last time they saw each other, she was just five years-old... (4.5")

They are just two of tens of thousands of Western Saharans, or Sahrawis, caught up in a conflict that began in the mid-1970s. (10")

It started when Morocco laid claim to Western Sahara as part of its own territory. (5.5")

The Polisario, a movement representing the Sahrawis, fought back, demanding a referendum on the fate of the territory. (7.5")

MAN WALKS

What resulted is a thirty-year-old conflict, including sixteen years of war. (6")

EMRABIH ON CAMERA

Emrabih, his wife and his daughter, took refuge in a camp in Algeria. (5")

DESERT VILLAGE

But he became concerned about his elderly parents, still in Western Sahara. So he returned to be with them. (8")

HARSTON ON CAMERA

JULIAN HARSTON: (English) **M**  
*"There's a humanitarian problem which needs to be solved."* (3")

PEOPLE IN DESERT VILLAGE

NARRATION  
 Julian Harston, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Western Sahara. (6")

HARSTON ON CAMERA

JULIAN HARSTON: (English) **M**  
*"The facts on the ground are that there are a large number of people unable to join the rest of their families."* (9")

CHILDREN RUNNING IN  
 CAMP

NARRATION  
 Thousands of Sahrawis , like Abouha and her father, remain separated by distance and the risk of crossing a heavily-mined sand-wall some 2,000 kilometres long built by the Moroccans during the war to divide the territory. (17")

DESERT

ABOUHA CRYING ON  
CAMERA

ABOUHA: (Hassaniya)

**F**

*“I wanted him to be here to share my life. All the difficulties I’ve been through would have been easier.” (8”)*

ABOUHA FEEDING GOATS

INSIDE REFUGEE AGENCY  
BUILDING

NARRATION

But that pain may soon be eased. After a series of steps to find a solution to the conflict did not meet the approval of either party, the Polisario and Morocco did agree to a proposal: a humanitarian reunion program by the UN’s Refugee Agency. It would allow families – many separated for more than three decades – to visit. (27”)

ABOUHA AND FATHER

Time passed... time spent with each other... sharing a lifetime of missed memories... (7”)

EMRABIH: (Hassiniya)

**M**

*“What is happening Abouha? You are healthy. We are finally together. You are my happiness.” (13”)*

ABOUHA CRYING

ABOUHA: (Hassiniya)

**F**

*“I am happy but thinking about leaving makes me sad because staying here is not forever.” (7”)*

FAMILIES AT AIRPORT

NARRATION

And those involved in the reunification programme say it’s a feeling shared by so many Sahrawis who don’t know what the future will hold. (8.5”)

Edward Benson, Programme Officer of the UN’s

Refugee Agency in Western Sahara: (5")

Edward Benson: (English)

**M**

BENSON ON CAMERA

*"Is this going to be the last time I am going to see this person, or is it going to be thirty years before I see this person? Is it going to be another 20 years? They simply don't know."* (8")

NARRATION

ABOUHA AND FATHER

It's early morning – after five short days – it's time to say goodbye. (6")

...there was nothing left to say. (3")

FATHER WALKS INTO  
HOUSE

....all Abouha's father can do is watch. (4")

FATHER WATCHES FROM  
WINDOW

But no matter how brief the visit, no matter if they'll ever see each other again, both father and daughter know there are some things that will last a lifetime. (12")

FATHER IN HOUSE

ABOUOHA IN CAR

This report was prepared by Andi Gitow for the United Nations.

UN LOGO