
Africa

1. The situation concerning Western Sahara

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held two meetings and adopted two resolutions in connections with the situation concerning Western Sahara. In those meetings, the Council discussed the negotiations between the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario) and Morocco on the status of Western Sahara, the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and the question of human rights in the region. The mandate of MINURSO was extended twice by the Council for periods of one year.¹

30 April 2008 to 30 April 2009: extension of the mandate of MINURSO

On 30 April 2008, the Council adopted resolution 1813 (2008) to extend the mandate of MINURSO until 30 April 2009. Despite the concern expressed by the representatives of Costa Rica and South Africa over the absence of any mention of human rights in the draft resolution and the threat of a “technical veto” by the Russian Federation if the proposed amendments by Costa Rica were put to a vote, the resolution was adopted unanimously. The representative of South Africa also expressed concern at some of the language in the resolution, particularly the use of the word “realism”, which he feared could be interpreted in such a way as to deny the right of self-determination to the

people of Western Sahara.² Council members called on both parties, Frente Polisario and Morocco, to continue negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith.

On 30 April 2009, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1871 (2009), by which it, inter alia, extended the mandate of MINURSO until 30 April 2010, and welcomed the parties’ agreement with the suggestion of the newly appointed Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara to hold small, informal talks in preparation for a fifth round of negotiations. In the discussion following the vote,³ several delegations stressed the importance of making progress on the human dimension of the conflict and welcomed its inclusion in the resolution. The representative of Austria stressed the support of his delegation for a results-oriented approach in the field of human rights and maintained that both parties had the obligation to ensure respect for the human rights of the people of Western Sahara.⁴ The representative of Costa Rica, however, expressed regret that the Council had not endorsed the Secretary-General’s call to the parties to remain engaged with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.⁵ Speakers expressed satisfaction with the unanimity of the vote, which sent a message to the parties that progress in negotiations should be made.

¹ Resolutions 1813 (2008) and 1871 (2009). For more information, see part X, in regard to MINURSO.

² S/PV.5884, pp. 2-3 (Costa Rica), pp. 3-4 (Russian Federation) and pp. 4-5 (South Africa).

³ The draft resolution, contained in document S/2009/224, was orally amended before the vote.

⁴ S/PV.6117, p. 6.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

Meetings: the situation concerning Western Sahara

| <i>Meeting and date</i> | <i>Sub-item</i> | <i>Other documents</i> | <i>Invitations</i> | <i>Speakers</i> | <i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i> |
|-------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 5884th 30 April 2008 | Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2008/251) | Draft resolution submitted by 5 Member States ^a (S/2008/284) | Rule 37 Spain | 6 Council members ^b | Resolution 1813 (2008) 15-0-0 |
| 6117th 30 April 2009 | Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2009/200 and Corr.1) | Draft resolution submitted by 5 Member States ^c (S/2009/224) | Rule 37 Spain | 8 Council members ^d | Resolution 1871 (2009) 15-0-0 |

^a France, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom and United States.

^b Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, France, Russian Federation, South Africa and United States.

^c France, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom and United States.

^d Austria, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, France, Russian Federation, Uganda, United Kingdom and United States.

2. The situation in Liberia

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held eight meetings, including two private meetings with the troop-contributing countries,⁶ concerning the situation in Liberia, in which it adopted five resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter and received a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia. The Council focused on the drawdown process, which had commenced in line with resolution 1777 (2007), discussing the appropriate pace of the drawdown and progress made in meeting benchmarks.

The Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) twice, for periods of six months and one year, respectively, with a reduced military but increased police presence.⁷ The Council renewed the sanctions regime three times and

also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts three times.⁸

In May 2009, the Council visited Liberia as part of its mission to Africa.⁹

14 April 2008: briefing on UNMIL

On 14 April 2008, in a briefing to the Council on the basis of the Secretary-General's report, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General said that Liberia, free of conflict since 2003 after a devastating 14-year-long civil war, was now a place of hope. However, that hope was tempered by a tenuous and fragile peace, with security still heavily reliant on United Nations military and police presence. She called for prudence while proceeding with the drawdown, so as not to put at risk the gains made in

⁶ 5972nd meeting, held on 9 September 2008, and 6184th meeting, held on 3 September 2009.

⁷ Resolutions 1836 (2008) and 1885 (2009).

⁸ Resolutions 1819 (2008), 1854 (2008) and 1903 (2009). For more information, see part IX, sect I.B, in regard to the Panel of Experts.

⁹ For more information, see the present part, sect. 40, and part VI, sect. II, regarding Security Council missions.