



CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

UN Human Rights Council: 21st Session
Oral Intervention: Item 6 – Morocco UPR
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
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The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies expresses its concern regarding the grave violations which continue to be committed against the people of Western Sahara by the Moroccan state, as referred to by a number of states during the oral review session of Morocco's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Such practices include arbitrary arrests; reported torture, ill-treatment, and sexual abuse in detention; the lack of guarantees of fair trials for Sahrawis; targeting of Sahrawi rights defenders; and the ongoing deterioration of the economic and social rights of the Sahrawi community. Also concerning is Morocco's blatant interference in Sahrawis' exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, including by banning dissenting political views on Western Sahara, blocking the formation and interfering with the work of NGOs focusing on the region, and the violent dispersal of peaceful demonstrations.

In light of these violations, we are concerned that the Working Group's report does not consistently display the many references to Western Sahara made by states at the oral review. While some of these references were retained, others were completely removed or stripped of their significance. We therefore call upon states to condemn ongoing violations in Western Sahara and to demand that this Council be fully informed on the state of rights in the region.

We note Morocco's voluntary pledge to submit a progress report in two years on the implementation of the recommendations accepted. We call upon the government of Morocco to accept and immediately and fully implement all recommendations related to improving the situation of human rights in Western Sahara, and within its territory.

In particular, we urge Morocco to accept the recommendation calling for conformity with international standards of the procedures governing registration of civil society organizations, including organizations advocating for the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, along with the recommendation calling for the establishment of a human rights component to the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), as this is the only UN peacekeeping mission not having such a component.