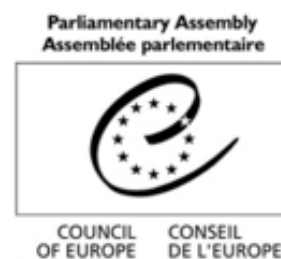


Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



Resolution 1408 (2004)¹

Situation in Western Sahara

1. The Parliamentary Assembly remains concerned at the lack of substantial progress in finding a fair and lasting political solution, which is acceptable to the different parties, to the dispute over Western Sahara.
2. The conflict in Western Sahara causes unacceptable hardship and suffering for innocent people and has led to an unbearable humanitarian situation which should no longer be tolerated.
3. The United Nations has been seeking a settlement in Western Sahara since the withdrawal of Spain in 1976. In 1988, the Secretary-General submitted the settlement plan calling for a definite solution to the question of Western Sahara through a ceasefire and the holding of a referendum concerning the self-determination of the territory's people.
4. The Assembly gives its full support to the United Nations, including the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (Minurso), set up in 1991, and to the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, in their tireless efforts to assist the parties concerned to find a solution to the dispute. It pays special tribute to the Personal Envoy, who has met several times during recent months with both Morocco's leaders and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario) with the aim of getting the parties to work towards the acceptance and implementation of the Peace Plan for Self-Determination of the People of Western Sahara.
5. The Assembly gives its full backing to United Nations Security Council [Resolution 1541](#) (2004) of 29 April 2004 by which the Security Council reaffirms its support for the Peace Plan for Self-Determination of the People of Western Sahara as an optimum political solution as well as its strong support for the United Nations Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy in their efforts to achieve a mutually acceptable political solution to the conflict over Western Sahara.
6. While the Frente Polisario officially accepted the Peace Plan for Self-Determination of the People of Western Sahara on 6 July 2003, Morocco, in its final response of 15 April 2004, does not accept essential elements of the Peace Plan. It does not agree with the proposed transitional period of self-government, aimed at offering the bona fide residents of Western Sahara an opportunity to determine their future themselves. Morocco considers that this period would imply uncertainty as to the final status of the territory and thus is likely to usher in an era of insecurity and instability for the whole Maghreb and considers that the final nature of the autonomy is not negotiable.
7. The Assembly urges the authorities of Morocco to seize the opportunity and show a compromising attitude towards acceptance of the peace plan and hence to put an end to the dispute over Western Sahara.
8. The Assembly invites the neighbouring states to co-operate with the United Nations in finding a fair and final solution to the conflict.
9. The Assembly also calls on its member states to contribute by appropriate means in encouraging the parties concerned to work with the United Nations towards rapid acceptance and implementation of the peace plan.
10. While the Assembly agrees with the importance of concentrating efforts on the acceptance of the peace plan, it underlines the need not to forget the humanitarian aspects of the dispute, including the food situation in the Tindouf area refugee camps. In this connection, the Assembly notes with satisfaction that since February 2003, 843 Moroccan prisoners of war have been released by the Frente Polisario and repatriated to Morocco under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The Assembly calls on the Frente Polisario to expedite the release of the remaining 412 prisoners.
11. The Assembly gives its support to the ICRC, which continues to visit the prisoners regularly and provide them with medical care. The Assembly calls on both Morocco and the Frente Polisario to continue to co-operate with the ICRC in accounting for those who are still missing in relation to the conflict.
12. As regards the confidence-building measures, the Assembly notes with satisfaction that since March 2004 family visits have started and are proceeding well, and calls on both parties to continue co-operating with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Minurso to ensure the smooth running and extension of those family visits. It also asks both parties to co-operate with the UNHCR in implementing the mail service between the Western Sahara and the Tindouf refugee camps, in accordance with the arrangements set up by the UNHCR.

13. As regards financial aspects, the Assembly notes with regret that the amount of unpaid contributions to the special account for Minurso amounted to US\$45 million at the end of March 2004. The Assembly urges the governments of those member states with unpaid contributions to respect their commitments and to pay them without delay in order to allow Minurso to continue its activities as planned.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 23 November 2004 (see [Doc. 10346](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Puche).*