



## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS

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### **Open Letter to the UN Secretary General**

Excellency,

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers expresses its deepest concern at the resuming of the armed conflict in the Non Self-Governing Territory of Western Sahara that followed the breaking of the cease-fire by the Kingdom of Morocco.

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers also expresses its deepest concern at the increasing repression of Sahrawi civilians, notably human rights defenders and journalists, by the Moroccan authorities both in the Kingdom of Morocco and in the occupied Western Sahara.

Harassment, brutality, arbitrary use of force, arbitrary arrests, torture, false accusations, inequitable trials and arbitrary detentions have become part of the common everyday life of the Saharawi civilians who are waiting since 1966 (UNGA res. 2229 – XXI) the organisation of a free referendum of self-determination and independence.

While the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara is the only UN Mission whose main mandate is the implementation of a fundamental peoples' right, the systematic obstruction to all efforts deployed by precedent UNSG Personal Envoys has impeded the Mission to accomplish its very mandate in conformity with international law, the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and resolution 1514 (XV).

The Spanish withdrawal from the Territory in February 1976 left Western Sahara without an internationally recognized administering Power (a unique case) at a moment when the Kingdom of Morocco had already invaded the Non Self-Governing Territory (also a unique case).

This situation requires the United Nations to assume a primarily responsibility over the people of Western Sahara, which the General Assembly recognizes in adopting its resolution entitled "Question of Western Sahara".

It is the International Association of Democratic Lawyers' conviction that nothing justifies the persistent delay of the implementation of the right to self-determination and independence of the Saharawi people.

Considering your personal experience when Portugal played a major role, with you as Prime Minister, in the process of self-determination of the Timorese people and considering that the last Personal Envoy for Western Sahara left his position in August 2019, we call upon you to assume your personal responsibility in resuming the negotiations between the Polisario Front and the Kingdom of Morocco, in order to implement the MINURSO's core mandate.

Sincerely yours,

International Association of Democratic Lawyers