



Marie Rimmer CBE, MP
Member of Parliament for St. Helens
South & Whiston
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 4847/01744 752075

Situation regarding Western Sahara

I was deeply concerned by the decision of President Trump in 2020 to unilaterally recognise Morocco's claim to sovereignty over the disputed territory of Western Sahara. I believe that the UK should not follow this approach and that the UK Government should continue to stand firm and recognise the rights of the people of Western Sahara to determine their own future.

The UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was originally established by UN Security Council resolution in 1991 to monitor the ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario Front, and to implement a referendum to determine Western Sahara's final status. I recognise that no such referendum has yet taken place.

MINURSO's mandate was most recently extended to 31 October 2022 by UN Security Council resolution 2548. The resolution requested that the UN Secretary-General report regularly to the UN Security Council on the status and progress of negotiations and challenges to MINURSO's operations.

The UN Secretary-General has published a new report on the situation in Western Sahara, this was published ahead of the UN Security Council's decision to renew the mandate of MINURSO to the 31st October 2022. The report can be found [here](#).

More widely, I know that the role of the UN Secretary-General's personal envoy for Western Sahara was vacant for a prolonged period from May 2019 (following the resignation of Horst Köhler for health reasons). On 6 October 2021, it was announced that Staffan de Mistura had been appointed to this role.

I am aware of recent ceasefire violations, including the Moroccan authorities' dismantling of a camp established by Sahrawi protesters. I believe that both parties should avoid further escalation, return to the 1991 ceasefire agreement, and re-engage with the UN-led political process.

I welcome that the UK Government has said its position in relation to Western Sahara remains unchanged and that it continues to regard the status of Western Sahara as undetermined.

I will continue to follow the situation in Western Sahara and encourage the UK Government to support UN efforts towards a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

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Constituency Office:

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP, 2nd Floor, Century House, Hardshaw Street, St. Helens WA10 1QU, 01744 752075,
marie.rimmer.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.marierimmer.co.uk