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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Written statement* submitted by Réseau Unité pour le Développement de Mauritanie, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[19 May 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Extrajudicial Killing of Saharawi in Tindouf Refugee Camps

We writing to you today to express my grave concerns regarding the alarming situation faced by Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf refugee camps, located on Algerian soil. These camps are administered by Frente Polisario, a non-state actor that exerts significant control over the lives of the refugees. However, the ultimate responsibility to protect these individuals from any form of violation or abuse lies with the Algerian state.

The right to life is universally recognized as one of the most fundamental human rights, as enshrined in various international instruments, including Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. It is with deep concern that I bring to your attention the reports of violations of this fundamental right, leading to the unlawful killings of peaceful Sahrawi civilians.

The United Nations Human Rights Committee, in its concluding observations dated July 20, 2018, has expressed serious concerns regarding the situation in the Tindouf refugee camps. Specifically, the committee highlighted allegations that victims of human rights violations in the Tindouf refugee camps do not have access to effective remedies before the courts of the Algerian state. The committee urged the Algerian authorities to ensure the freedom and security of persons and to provide access to effective remedies for all individuals in its territory, including those in the Tindouf refugee camps.

In light of these observations, we are deeply concerned that the Algerian authorities may continue to ignore the violations committed against Sahrawi refugees and prevent accountability for those responsible, including officials and leaders of Frente Polisario. The lack of pressure on Algeria and the Frente Polisario leadership has left many Sahrawi refugees without justice.

Recent incidents of violence against refugees in the Tindouf refugee camps are particularly alarming. On April 9, 2025, at least two Sahrawi gold prospectors were killed and several others injured, reportedly by an Algerian patrol in the El Argoub area near the Dakhla camp. The victims include Sayed Ahmed Ould Gholam Ould Belali, a father of two girls from the Ait Moussa and Ali tribe, and Ali Mahmoud Fando, from the Riqabat tribe, Ahl Qasim Ibrahim.

These tragic incidents are part of a disturbing pattern of violence that we have documented:

- In April 2024, three Sahrawi prospectors were killed during a deadly chase and shooting by Algerian military patrols.
- In May 2024, a drone attack by the Algerian National People's Army resulted in the deaths of several individuals, including two identified Sahrawis and an Azawadi child.
- In November 2020, an incident involving the Algerian National Gendarmerie led to two deaths and serious injuries to another individual.

These incidents highlight a deeply concerning pattern of violence and a potential "policy of intended killings" by the Algerian military against Sahrawi refugees, which constitutes a grave violation of international law.

In light of these grave concerns, I urge the following actions:

1. **Investigation:** I call upon the United Nations mechanisms, including the High Commissioner for Refugees and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to initiate an independent investigation into these atrocities and to apply international standards to protect Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf refugee camps.
2. **Accountability:** The Algerian authorities must be held accountable for the atrocities committed against Sahrawi refugees on their soil. I urge your honorable council to pressure Algeria to conduct a transparent investigation, bring those responsible for these crimes to justice, and allow international NGOs to monitor the situation.
3. **Protection:** Immediate protection must be provided for Sahrawi civilians in the Tindouf refugee camps. The international community should ensure that Algeria fulfills its obligations to protect these vulnerable populations.

4. Monitoring: I emphasize the need for ongoing monitoring of human rights conditions in the Tindouf refugee camps and accountability for the Polisario Front group regarding its management of the refugee population.

The international community has a responsibility to uphold the fundamental human rights of all individuals, including the Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf refugee camps. I urge your esteemed council to take decisive action to uncover the truth behind these systematic violations perpetrated by the Algerian government and to ensure justice and protection for the Sahrawi people.
