

Special Political and Decolonisation Committee

THAIMUN VIII

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Topic 1:

The question of sovereignty of the Western Sahara and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

Introduction:

After the colonization of Africa ended, European countries withdrew their rule from Africa. The former Spanish colony Western Sahara was liberated from under the Spanish regime in 1976. This was because the ruling of the territory was given to Morocco and Mauritania.

Since 1973 the Polisario has fought against first the Spanish and then the Mauritanian and Moroccan rule. It has rebelled against both the Moroccan and Mauritanian militaries with some result. Mauritania made tranquility with Western Sahara after being vanquished but Morocco surmounted the whole territory with the avail of the U.S. Since 1979, the whole territory of Western Sahara has been occupied by Morocco and is essentially a Moroccan colony.

The quandaries arise with the way Morocco treats Western Sahara and how the rest of the world isn't reacting. Morocco mines phosphate and has acceded with the European Coalescence for a fishery acquiescent, but neither of these benefits the Sahrawi people.

The Polisario wants independence and sovereignty and Morocco doesn't want to grant it and that is how the aggression between the parties has perpetuated for so long.

Key Terms:

Sahrawi: The Sahrawi, or Saharawi people, are the indigenous people living in the western part of the Sahara desert which includes Western Sahara, southern Morocco, much of Mauritania and the extreme southwest of Algeria.

Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR): Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is a state that had declared itself over the conflicted territory in Western Sahara, which is under the occupation of Morocco. The independence of SADR has been recognized at various times by 80 countries, however, starting from the mid-1990s, a number of them withdrew or suspended their recognition.

The Right of Colonial Peoples to Self-Determination: An international law which has been recognized and affirmed by the United Nations and other international organizations, such as the International Court of Justice. In this topic, the decolonization of Spain had given Western Sahara self-determination; but is unsuccessful as it has been occupied by the Moroccan military since 1975.

Polisario Front: A left-leaning Western Saharan liberation movement that pursues independence for the territory of Western Sahara. The organization consists largely of the Sahrawi people.

MINURSO: The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. It is to monitor the armistice and the area limitations that the opposing parties have and the exchange of prisoners with 1 000 civilian and 1 700 military personnel.

Referendum: A direct and universal vote in which an entire electorate is invited to vote on a particular proposal and can take a nationwide or local form. This may result in the creation of a new policy or law.

Non-Self-Governing Territory: In Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations, the Non-Self-Governing Territories are defined as “territories whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government.” In General Assembly’s resolution 66 (I) of 14 December 1946, it listed 74 territories that are applied to the Chapter XI of the Charter

Background:

In 1884 Spain colonized Western Sahara – at that point named as Spanish Sahara – among other countries in Africa and everywhere in the world. Just about 100 years after the fact in October 1975 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) decided that individuals ought to have their state in their nation's purview. ICJ overlooked Morocco and Mauritania's case over the domain and decried the felicitous for liberation and their administration that the Sahrawi public have. Furthermore, the ICJ declared a year later, in 1976, that Spain should decolonize Western Sahara. Notwithstanding the guidance, the liberation never came and the force just transmuted hands. Morocco and Mauritania needed the region of Western Sahara split between them.

With the U.S.'s support of Morocco, the late Moroccan King Hassan II arranged over 300 000 Moroccans to the domain in what was identified as the "Green March" in November 1975. This caused more than 150 000 Sahrawis to elude to western Algeria. Along these lines and the pressing factor applied from the U.S. who upheld Morocco, in 1975 the Spanish regime – that was managing its issues with progressing to majority rules system – was compelled to consent to give up the region to Mauritania and Morocco. On the fourteenth of November Morocco acquired 66% of Western Sahara's region, while Mauritania acquired the rest in a settlement called the Madrid Agreement.

In 1976 Spain pulled out from the domain and on the 27th of February the Polisario Front – which was established in 1973 – commenced a guerrilla battle against contradicting powers and pronounced the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). On the fourth of March, the incipient regime was conceived. The current SADR President Mohamed Abdelaziz was named as the Polisario Front secretary-general back in August 1976. While assailing the region of Western Sahara the Moroccan powers endured hefty misfortunes and the Mauritians were fiercely defeated. After the misfortunes, Mauritania consented to a harmonious arrangement with the Polisario Front in August 1978 yet Morocco proceeded with the triumph against the Polisario and with the military guide from the U.S. had the option to surmount the entirety of the beforehand Western Saharan region by 1987. The Polisario Front and the Moroccan powers arrived at a UN potentiated armistice in September 1991.

On 29th of April 1991, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was made by the Security Council (SC). It should execute SC's goal from 1990 for arriving settled in Western Sahara. There was supplementally to be a progress period in 1992 to go forward with the submission. In May 1996 the UN pulled out their customary denizen faculty while the military staff was to state and optically canvass the placidity negotiation.

In 1997 in London, Lisbon, and Houston, and 2000 in London, James Baker, the UN Unique Envoy and past U.S. Secretary of state intervened between the two contradicting accumulations

to a construal. There is to be an ID cycle for electors – given the statistics actualized by Spain in 1973 -, UN ascendancy during a progress period, and implicit rules for the submission crusade with veneration to whether Western Sahara ought to become autonomous or be incorporated to Morocco. The Polisario Front has communicated their alacrity to favor of the mission, yet Morocco has been hesitant as they are punctilious about how this will influence their nation as the majority of the Sahrawi need liberation, categorically when the Polisario doesn't require the post-Green March Moroccan pilgrims to reserve a privilege to cast a ballot in the submission. In the wake of being expanded a few times, the current command for the cull is expected 30th of April 2013.

The best issues between the two amassments lie in the territory of Western Sahara's autonomy and the characteristic assets. Although legitimately Western Sahara should acquire its autonomy, Morocco is hesitant to concede it. The Polisario front backs the cull that would give Western Sahara their autonomy relying upon general society assessment. Morocco then again would for Western Sahara to have self-rule under Moroccan sway.

The region of Western Sahara is opulent in customary assets. Morocco and Western Sahara engender together the most Phosphate on the planet and the coastal waters of Western Sahara are affluent fishing waters and there are conceivable oil stores there. The benefit of these goes to Moroccan pilgrims, unfamiliar organizations, and the King of Morocco. This causes animosity with the Polisario Front and the Sahrawi as Western Sahara is a helpless domain.

The economic coalition with reverence to fishing between the EU and Morocco is one reason for the exceptionally inimical cognations. The EU-Morocco Fisheries Agreement expresses that fishing can transpire in 'the waters under the potency or purview of the Kingdom of Morocco'. The motivation behind why Western Sahara doesn't affirm this is that in light of the fact that the concrete territory for fishing hasn't been expressed and as Morocco considers the to be of Western Sahara as theirs, the Europeans are sanctioned to fish there. This arrangement has since culminated as in December 2011 the prodigious majority of the Eu Parliamentarians cast a ballot against the arrangement. A year and a moiety later in 2013, another arrangement was made, however, the territory of fishing wasn't at present restricted more than for it to remain inside the Moroccan waters.

Timeline

(Date - Event)

1884 - Spain colonized Western Sahara

1957 - Morocco, which had just become independent, claimed Western Sahara.

1965 - The UN instructed the decolonization of Western Sahara.

1973 - The Polisario Front is established

1975/1991 - Morocco annexed Western Sahara after Spain withdrew. The Polisario Front has been under guerilla war against Moroccan forces for 16 years.

1976 - Polisario guerillas declared the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).

1979 - Mauritania withdraws from its territory, which was quickly claimed by Morocco.

1991/Current Time - United Nations arranged a cease-fire that ended the war between the Polisario Front and Morocco. But, Morocco had not yet agreed to the referendum on independence.

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Topic 2:

Unexploded ordnance in active and former war zones and border regions

Key Terms and Definitions

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) are defined as “explosive remnants of war that did not explode when they were deployed”.

Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) is an umbrella term that covers all forms off UXO and Abandoned Ordnance.

Landmines are hidden explosives underground that detonate when pressure is applied. There are several types of mines. Anti-personnel mines are triggered by the weight of a single soldier. As such they are placed in front of trenches and in open battlefields. Anti-tank mines are mines that have high amounts of explosives and are only triggered when a significant amount of pressure is applied. These mines are used to immobilize tanks, heavy artillery and transport vehicles.

Cluster Munitions are weapons that explode into smaller submunitions. This is to increase the effectiveness of the munition, as there is damage done in the initial blast radius as well as dangerous shrapnel that will harm any personnel or vehicles not taken out by the blast. These can include: Surface-to-air munitions, weapons that are launched from the ground to take out aerial forces, commonly known as anti-aircraft fire or flak; Surface-to-surface munitions, usually missiles that are launched from one site to destroy infrastructure and facilities in another area; Air-to-air munitions, missiles and bombs that are launched from one aerial unit to fight and destroy another aerial unit; Air-to-surface munitions, which include bombs and ordnance dropped from planes – this is the major cause of UXO.

History and Timeline of Events

World War II

Many of the UXO and munitions can be found on the ‘Western Front’, in France and Belgium. These are mostly in the form of unexploded shells and mortar and were of several types. There are also a lot of UXO left in Japan and the UK, as a result of aerial raids and bombing by the US and Nazi Germany respectively. UXOs can be spread by typhoons, hurricanes and tsunamis, and Japan’s geographical position on the borders of three tectonic plates has worsened the issue.

Vietnam War

Over the Vietnam war, the US and allies dropped 7.5 million tons of explosive payload on Vietnam and neighboring Cambodia and Laos. Many thousands of bombs are unexploded and remain hidden underground to this day. Since the end of the war, over 40,000 Vietnamese people have died as a result of unexploded shells and bombs re-firing after being excavated. At the current rate, it will take nearly 300 years to get rid of all the unexploded ordnance there.

Gulf War and Algerian Civil War

These wars, in the Middle East and Northern Africa respectively, have caused a huge amount of UXO to be buried in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Algeria. The First Gulf war led to Iran and Iraq suffering from huge amounts of UXO. Algeria also has a lot of UXO due to the major civil war that occurred between 1991 and 2002.

21st Century

A variety of wars and conflicts have led to huge swathes of land being plagued by UXO. The ISIS caliphate in Iraq and Syria has led to more UXO being present, especially anti-personnel and anti-tank land mines. The 2006 Israel-Lebanon war also furthered this issue, along with the Second Gulf War and the US invasion of Iraq.

Current Situation

At present there are roughly 110 million mines and an unknown number of UXO in the world. There are a variety of issues caused by UXO that make them so deadly. The actual blast and detonation is responsible for the instantaneous death or maiming, however, UXO can cause long-term issues as well. Pollutants from the explosives and chemicals can leach into the soil and contaminate groundwater and crops. The explosives can also cause forest fires and devastate local ecosystems.

Land that has UXO limits the ability of locals to farm the land. Subsistence farmers are the hardest hit by the lack of safe farmland. Infrastructure and buildings cannot be constructed on certain areas of land, leaving people cut off from vital facilities such as good hospitals, roads and education.

Case Study (Laos):

During the Vietnam War, the US conducted some 580,000 bombing missions on Laos, averaging out to approximately one raid every 8 minutes. Around 30% of the munitions dropped did not explode on impact, resulting in almost 80 million UXO remaining live on the ground at the end of the war. Since the war drew to a close, 29,000 people have died as a result of these UXO. The local citizens have no option but to work on contaminated land as their livelihoods are based on farming.

Solutions:

Previous UN Resolutions and Treaties

UN SC Resolution 2026 – Pertains to the minefields in Cyprus.

[<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2026>]

Ottawa Treaty – Aims at eliminating anti-personnel mines all over the world. It has been signed and ratified by 133 countries. Notable exceptions include the United States, India, Russia, China and Iran.

[https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=XXVI-5&chapter=26&clang=_en]

UN GA Resolution 62/99 – A resolution on assistance in mine action.

[<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/62/99>]

Actions Taken

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines organization has gained a lot of support and won the Nobel Peace Prize. Many famous people have gotten involved to help raise awareness and funds for UXO removal. The UN has also made a 5-year plan on how to tackle mines and UXO.

Possible Solutions

There are a variety of solutions. This is not much of a partisan issue and so delegates should seek to write a bipartisan resolution that many countries can support.

Suggestions include:

- Destroying existing stockpiles of ordnance.
- Contributions funding research and development projects regarding clearing of contaminated areas.
- Deterrent against states who use UXO.

- Taking up national cleaning projects to get rid of UXO from fields and land, such as the Iron Harvest.

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