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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Promotion du Développement Economique et Social - PDES, 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.

[23 May 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



The establishment of economic and social rights and situation of poverty in Tindouf camps in southwestern Algeria

The Algerian state has always been committed to redoubling its efforts to strengthen the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. We can say, on the basis of the information available to us regarding the economic and social conditions in the Tindouf camps in southwestern Algeria, that we have not registered any progress in this regard.

We draw attention to the fact that, since its inception, the Tindouf camps(1), located in southwestern Algeria, have remained outside the host country's development plans and have not been connected to the necessary services to ensure the right to an adequate standard of living; the Algerian authorities have continued to treat what happens inside the camps as something outside of their international responsibilities and obligations; the Tindouf camps depend on international aid to meet their basic needs: since 1993, the European Union has allocated an annual aid program in coordination with other international donors to avoid duplication.

Algeria considers that development efforts in the most disadvantaged areas are implemented. However, the refugees in the Tindouf camps still suffer from many problems related to their standard of living. As for the realization of the right to food, the residents of the camps, since their creation, depend for their food on humanitarian aid whose distribution is controlled by the Polisario, in cooperation with the Algerian authorities, which has made the access of the population to it conditioned by the proximity of the Polisario leadership, and that over the years, this aid has been subject to major detour(2), ranging from the substitution of goods by others of lesser quality, to looting or sale on the markets of the camps(3), in Algeria or in neighboring countries(4) by the Polisario leadership, which has resulted in a shortage of basic foodstuffs, including for infants and newborns.

The existing problem is not only the implementation of the right to food, but also the services related to its implementation, although the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the organization "Andalusia International Solidarity" are working in the water and sanitation sector to build and maintain the water supply network in each of the four camps, But access to drinking water remains a difficult problem, due to the quality of the water, which remains largely polluted or below the required standard, or due to the scarcity of water compared to the demand for water; Camp residents frequently demand, through peaceful demonstrations often met with repression(5), the supply of clean water; accusing officials of negligence and selling water to project holders, while ordinary people experience a thirst crisis.

Recommendations

- To take measures to strengthen the enjoyment of economic and social rights in the most disadvantaged areas, including the Sahrawi refugee camps in the Wilaya of Tindouf;
- Include the Tindouf camps in the development plans of the host country, Algeria;
- Guaranteeing the right to a decent standard of living for the inhabitants of the Tindouf camps;
- Providing humanitarian aid to the inhabitants of the Tindouf camps and fighting against all forms of misappropriation and looting;
- Work to improve basic services.

Geneva International Observatory for Peace Democracy and Human Rights "TOPDHR-GENEVA", NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

(1) The Tindouf camps are located in the extreme southwest of Algeria, where extreme weather conditions, with temperatures exceeding 50 degrees in summer with a shortage of water, classify them among the most disadvantaged areas.

(2) The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) published a report in 2007 based on the results of the 2003 investigation, which made heavy accusations (some names of Algerian officials and the Polisario leadership are cited) regarding the detour of EU humanitarian aid, intended for the inhabitants of the Tindouf camps, from the Algerian port of Oran:

<https://saharanews24.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/jk45as912ws-150203082157-conversion-gate01.pdf>

(3) Video documenting the group of angry women in the camps: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=13&v=q3zIKGOUGmE

(4) Video documenting the sale of goods provided by the European Union as humanitarian aid to the Tindouf camps, on Mauritanian markets: <https://youtu.be/NAPRetuINYE>

(5) Polisario forces intervene against demonstrators in Rabouni camp, demanding drinking water, see the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/SAHARAUI100/videos/pcb.2279287402131458/2279287332131465/?type=3&theater>