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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Item 58 of the preliminary list*
REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING
OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-sixth year

Letter dated 17 March 1981 from the Permanent
Representative of Mauritania to the United
Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and further to the conversation we had today, I have the honour to give you an account of the events which took place in Mauritania yesterday morning:

1. In the morning of Monday, 16 March 1981, at approximately 10 a.m. GMT, several commandos attacked Nouakchott at different points, taking some hostages, killing seven persons and wounding several dozen others.
2. Shortly before midday, and thanks to the prompt and effective intervention of the Mauritanian armed forces, the commandos were completely put out of action, being either killed or captured.
3. This group of mercenaries, consisting mostly of Mauritaniens, was led by two traitors - former officers of the Mauritanian army who have been convicted of desertion and treason - namely, Lieutenant-Colonels Mohamed Ould Bah Ould Abd El Kader and Ahmed Salem Ould Sidi.
4. The group, which crossed the Sénégal river, went to Nouakchott with the intention of assassinating the leading public figures of Mauritania and immediately broadcasting an appeal by radio to the Kingdom of Morocco requesting the intervention of the air force and army of the Royal Armed Forces.

The first confessions made by the commando leaders show that this act was staged by the most prominent Moroccan authorities.

* A/36/50.

In fact, in their expansionist mania and territorial greed, the Moroccan leaders mistook a dream for reality, underestimating with typical arrogance the vigilance of the Mauritanian people, their leaders and their armed forces.

However, for more than two years, the military committee and Government of Mauritania, true to their conviction that only a peaceful and fraternal Maghreb can effectively meet the challenges of our age, have continued to place their faith, come what may, in the moderation and common sense of those who are responsible for leading the destinies of the peoples of the region.

Neither the ostentatious proclamation made at Rabat, in defiance of the most elementary rules of friendship, not to mention good-neighbourly relations, by a front of so-called "free" officers, nor the thinly veiled support given to the so-called "alliance for a democratic Mauritania", nor the statements, full of ill-considered threats, made by the most authoritative Moroccan spokesmen, nor the provocations and intimidations in the form of air raids, have caused the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to swerve from its genuine and sincere determination to maintain a strict neutrality in the face of a murderous and fratricidal war between the Royal Armed Forces of Morocco and the Saharan people's liberation forces.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania has now decided, in view of the recent serious escalation by Morocco, to sever diplomatic relations with that country, a severance for which Rabat ultimately bears full responsibility.

It calls your attention, Sir, to the gravity of this destabilizing operation undertaken by Morocco, in view of the dangers it entails for the western Maghreb and West Africa.

It assures you, however, that this aggression will not deflect the country from its stated national objectives: the quest for peace in the Maghreb, the democratization of national public life and the rehabilitation of the economy.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, while reserving the right, in future, to take any appropriate action at the United Nations level, is now confining its action to informing you and, through you, the international community of this matter.

I would accordingly request that you kindly arrange for this letter to be issued as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 58 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohamed Said Ould HAMODY
Permanent Representative
