

UNGA:

United Nations General Assembly

Topic: advocate for indigenous
sovereignty and self-government in the
Western Sahara

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General Assembly
United Nations



Letter to Delegates:

Dear delegates, welcome to SPIS MUN 2025. My name is Josue Lara. I'm honored to introduce myself as your moderator, and I would love to introduce you to your director Mateo Calles. We will serve as your moderator and director during this SPIS MUN 2025.

As a delegate, you will have the chance to debate potential solutions worldwide, though in the UNGA commit, you will be focusing more on political, humanitarian, and social things. We can understand that MUN is very challenging, especially if it is your first time, but you will overcome the challenges and commit to your goals this is a unique experience that is worth it, so you need to be dedicated to achieve your goals and remember "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts."

UNGA CHAIR



History of the Committee:

The United Nations General Assembly is the main policy-making of the Organization. Comprising all Member States, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter of the United Nations. Each of the 193 Member States of the United Nations has an equal vote. The Assembly meets in regular sessions from September to December each year, and thereafter as required. It discusses specific issues through dedicated agenda items or sub-items, which lead to the adoption of resolutions. Sitting arrangements in the General Assembly Hall change for each session. During the 79th Session (2024-2025), Yemen will occupy the first seat in the Hall, including in the Main Committees (followed by all the other countries, in English alphabetical order).



History of the Topic:

The Special Committee on Decolonization continued the substantive part of its 2023 session today, examining in depth the question of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Western Sahara. During the session, the 29-member Special Committee, formally known as the Special Committee on the Situation concerning the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The General Assembly has the role of discussing ideas and making some recommendations, though it has no power to enforce its resolutions or be forced to state action.

Other functions include admitting new members; selecting members of the Economic and Social Council, the nonpermanent members of the Security Council, and the Trusteeship Council; supervising the activities of the other UN organs, from which the General Assembly receives reports; and participating in the election of judges to the International Court of Justice and the selection of the secretary-general.



Introduction of the Topic:

Many speakers characterized Western Sahara as the last colony in Africa, emphasizing the need for its past situation to be addressed through an urgent self-determination referendum. Others voiced deep concern over the human rights violations perpetrated by Frente POLISARIO, a group of violations of human rights, particularly in the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria, endorsing an autonomy initiative put forth by Morocco as the most realistic and practical way forward. Representatives of several United Nations Member States noted they had established consulate generals in Laayoune, the Sahara's Territory largest city.

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The representative of Ethiopia was among several speakers lauding the work of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Staffan de Mistura, while also highlighting the efforts of the African Union, as a testament to the organization's commitment to finding peaceful solutions within the framework of African solutions to African problems. She called for a lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the situation by Security Council resolutions.



Key Players:

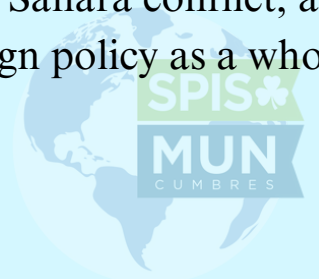
Morocco: occupies about 70 percent of the 266,000 square kilometers of Western Sahara's land territory. Thanks to the more than 150,000 troops of its armed forces deployed in the former Spanish colony and the construction of successive, military-fortified sand walls. The Polisario Front controls the rest of the territory, which is on the other side of these sand walls, inside the former Spanish colony, a rather deserted area with a very small population spread over several small villages.

United States: the United States, France, etc. — maintain a certain degree of indeterminacy regarding the legal regime that should be applied to Morocco, by the rules of international law in force, particularly concerning international humanitarian law.

France: France's President Emmanuel Macron has told Morocco's parliament that he believes Western Sahara should be under Moroccan sovereignty, and has pledged to invest French money there. France was the former colonial power in both Morocco and Algeria. It joins other nations including Spain, the US, and Israel in backing Morocco's plan.

Algeria: For nearly five decades, Algeria has used the dispute over Western Sahara as a front for its antagonization of Morocco. But behind Algeria's support for the Sahrawi cause lies a much more complex case of the Algerian establishment's determination to simultaneously avenge historical grievances and prevent Morocco from reclaiming a territory that would increase its strategic depth and make it the undisputed regional leader of the Maghreb.

Spain: The Spanish government has even recently stated that it supports the annexationist theses defended by the Moroccan monarchy. Given this situation, Spain's international law doctrine could adopt a more active and organized role in defending compliance with international law about the Western Sahara conflict, and in general in the development of Spain's foreign policy as a whole.



UN Actions:

Western Sahara is listed by the United Nations (UN) as a non-decolonized territory and is thus included in the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories, which regards Spain as the *de jure* administering state. Under international law, Western Sahara is not a legal part of Morocco, and it remains under the international laws of military occupation. When the United Nations was established in 1945, 750 million people - almost a third of the world's population then - lived in Territories that were non-self-governing, dependent on colonial Powers. Non-Self-Governing Territories due to their change in status or as a result of their choice of independence, free association, or integration with an independent State.



Current Status:

France has thrown its support behind Morocco's autonomy plan for disputed Western Sahara, shifting its decades-old position and adding itself to a growing list of countries to align with Morocco as the United Nations-mediated peace process remains without progress.

In a letter to King Mohammed VI, France's president Emmanuel Macron called the plan that Morocco proposed in 2007 to offer the region limited autonomy under its sovereignty as the only basis to solve the conflict. The shift dealt a blow to the pro-independence Polisario Front, which for decades had tried to be the legitimate representative of the indigenous Sahrawi people.



Guiding Questions:

1. How is this topic affected in your country?
2. What are the main challenges faced by the indigenous peoples of Western Sahara in their struggle for sovereignty and self-government?
3. What examples of indigenous self-government in other parts of the world could serve as models for Western Sahara?
4. What could the indigenous people do about the issue?
5. What percentage of indigenous sovereignty is affected by the problem?



Quorum:

1. France
2. Morocco
3. Spain
4. United States
5. Argelia
6. Namibia
7. South Africa
8. Cuba
9. Ecuador
10. Nigeria
11. Mauritania
12. Ireland
13. Norway
14. Sweden
15. Turkey
16. Brazil
17. Argentina
18. India
19. Chile
20. Mexico



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