



THE CONFEDERAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CCOO IN VIEW OF THE NEW POSITION OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT ON WESTERN SAHARA

Spain's foreign policy towards Western Sahara has taken a historic turn with the sending of a letter from the Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, to the King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, as well as subsequent statements by the head of the Government and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, José Manuel Albares, expressing Spain's intention to accept the autonomy plan for the Sahara proposed by the Moroccan authorities in 2007.

Thus, for the first time since Spain abandoned Western Sahara, a Government of Spain has officially positioned itself in favour of one of the parties to the conflict, in this case the occupying power, Morocco. Against this position, the Polisario Front, as the legitimate representative of the Sahrawi people, has always defended the need for a referendum on self-determination.

Faced with this new, unexpected and surprising turn of Spanish foreign policy, the Executive Committee of **CCOO** expresses its total re-

jection of the content of this Spanish governmental position, which once again betrays the Sahrawi people and contravenes the main resolutions of the United Nations on Western Sahara, the African Union, the European Union, the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Justice.

Over the last decades, **CCOO** has repeatedly condemned the continuous attacks by the Moroccan authorities on Sahrawi interests and the Sahrawi people, the violence against the Sahrawi population in the territories occupied by Morocco and especially against Sahrawi women and the subhuman living conditions of the Sahrawi population in the Tindouf camps.

This turnaround in the position of the Spanish government gives carte blanche to the Kingdom of Morocco to continue to exercise all kinds of violence against the Sahrawi population and takes us further and further away from a just solution for the Sahrawi people.





From our astonishment at this news and our deep concern about the impact that this decision may have on the lives of Sahrawi men and women, the **Executive Committee of CCOO** reminds the **Government of Spain**:

■ That international law does not recognise any Moroccan sovereignty or jurisdiction over the territory of Western Sahara, nor does it consider Morocco as the administering Power of the territory. This is confirmed, among other international norms and resolutions, by the UN Charter (Chapter 73), the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the 1975 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on Western Sahara and the 2002 UN opinion.

■ That Morocco's presence in the Sahrawi territory is only mentioned as an act of military "occupation" (UN General Assemblies Resolutions 34/39 of 1979 and 35/19 of 1980) and that it should be terminated.

■ That Western Sahara is still on the UN list of "non-self-governing territories", and its final political status has not yet been determined by the people of Western Sahara through the exercise of their legitimate right to self-determination, as clearly stated in all UN Resolutions, especially UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 of 1960.

■ The systematic plundering of Sahrawi natural resources by Morocco, the EU and others and the serious and systematic human rights violations in the occupied territories of Western Sahara, widely documented and denounced by international human rights organisations and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

FOR ALL THESE REASONS, CCOO DEMANDS THE GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN:

✓ To proceed, as soon as possible, to give the appropriate explanations for a decision that has surprised Spanish public opinion and to reconsider this position, which contravenes all known international resolutions on Western Sahara, thus expressing its unequivocal support for international resolutions and respect for human rights in the occupied by Morocco, and taking into account the recommendations and rulings emanating from the European Court of Justice and other international bodies.

✓ To comply with international law and assume the role of decolonisation of a territory that it abandoned to its fate, signing illegal and pre-constitutional agreements without assuming the role that international law obliges to assume and violating the rights generated by the Sahrawi workers during the colonial period.

✓ To respect the decisions and negotiations of the legitimate representative of the Sahrawi people, the Polisario Front, in order to reach a just and definitive solution to this last case of decolonisation in Africa, based on international legality and related to decolonisation.

✓ To facilitate ways for a negotiated solution to the conflict within international legality, which in no case involves unilaterally supporting the theses proposed by the Kingdom of Morocco on the autonomy of Western Sahara.





✓ To remember that the social and the labour rights of Sahrawi workers were recognised in 2011. Thus, the Spanish courts approved in Law 27/2011, an additional provision that urged the Administration to prepare a report quantifying the number of Sahrawi workers and the amounts corresponding to the workers of Spanish companies during the colonial era. Unfortunately, successive governments in subsequent years and up to the present have ignored and blocked compliance with this Law and its Provision, which both legitimately and legally should be assumed by the Spanish State and which year after year the Spanish and Sahrawi trade unions have been demanding without response to the failure to comply with Law 27/2011. The Spanish Government has the duty to proceed to its immediate application and compliance.

✓ That not only the Spanish trade unions, but the Spanish society as a whole in its civil, political and citizen expressions has been and continues to be deeply supportive of the cause and the needs of the Sahrawi people and that from **CCOO we** will not cease in our efforts to achieve justice for the Sahrawi cause and the recognition of the legal provisions approved at the international level and by the Spanish Parliament.

Finally, we insist on our categorical rejection, with no hesitation, of the decision communicated by the current Spanish government. Therefore, as we have already done in the European Parliament and in numerous spaces in the Spanish and international civil and trade union society, over the years, we call to promote today more than ever the support and solidarity with the Sahrawi people and their cause.

Madrid, 22 March 2022

