49th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 2: General Debate on the oral update by the High Commissioner

Right Livelihood and the Sahrawi Organ Against the Moroccan Occupation (ISACOM) express deep concern at the serious violations of international humanitarian law and systematic human rights violations occurring in Western Sahara, placed under illegal military occupation by the Kingdom of Morocco for over 40 years.

In the occupied territories, the brutal repression of any independent voices criticizing Moroccan rule remains the norm. Any attempts to claim the Sahrawi people’s inalienable right to self-determination and the respect of their fundamental freedoms are met with hostility and violence.

Activists are beaten, imprisoned, tortured, and sentenced without due process. Long-term arbitrary detention has been used as a tool to silence them. Human rights defenders are subject to constant physical and technological surveillance and have repeatedly been arbitrarily impeded to moving within the territories as well as to leaving Western Sahara. NGOs suffer arbitrary and politically motivated restrictions. Protests against Moroccan rule are systematically prohibited or repressed with violence.

Since 1975, the Sahrawi people’s rights have been trampled on with impunity: there is virtually no prosecution for the abuses committed against them, and the responsible officials walk freely on the streets.

Madam High Commissioner,

It is time for your Office to take a stand in the face of such blatant abuses and show the Sahrawi people that you don’t stand with the oppressor. We urge you to dispatch an observation mission to occupied Western Sahara without delay and to report to the Council on the human rights situation in the territories.

Thank you.