

Sahrawis lodge complaint against Polisario leaders, Algerian Army officers for serious HR abuses

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Madrid, Sahrawis, victims of torture, illegal detention and serious human rights abuses in Tindouf camps, southwestern Algeria, have decided to sue Polisario leaders and Algerian senior army officers before the Spanish justice, the victims' lawyers announced on Wednesday in Madrid.

The complaint will be lodged in a week by the NGO "Association sahraouie de défense des droits de l'homme" (ASADEDH) and many victims who have Moroccan and Spanish nationalities.

The current representative of Polisario in Spain, Brahim Ghali, Information "minister" of the so-called Sahrawi Republic, Sid Ahmed Batal and Education "minister", Bachir Mustapha Sayed, are among the Polisario officials that will be sued for "war crimes, torture, forced disappearance, illegal detention and human rights abuses."

Colonies "minister", Khalil sidi Mhamed, current coordinator with the UN mission in the Sahara (MINURSO) and former managing director of military security, Mohamed Khaddad, and former "prime minister", Mahfoud Ali Beiba, are also on the list of people to be sued on charges of torture against members of the Sahrawi population.

Senior officers of the Algerian army will also be sued for "complicity" and covering these abuses that took place on the Algerian territory in conjunction with the Algerian security, said the NGO president, Ramdan Mesaud, at a press conference in Madrid.

The victims' lawyers, José Manuel Romero Gonzalez and Carlos Sancho de la Calle, noted the existence of eyewitnesses and strong indices that would charge the defendants.

The two lawyers said they visited the Moroccan southern city of Laayoune, where they noted that a large number of victims still keep the aftereffects of torture administered by Polisario torturers to Sahrawis and even to Polisario founders "for the simple reason of not sharing their vision."

Polisario victims, still in life, have presented to the Spanish press and correspondents of international press a moving testimony about their sad experience in Polisario prisons on the Algerian territory.

"It is an enormous injustice to see that the person who arrested and tortured me for six years in Tindouf camps could move freely in Spain and carry out his propaganda without paying for his crimes," said Houcine Baida, Sahrawi human rights militant and a Polisario victim in allusion to Brahim Ghali.

Polisario is a separatist movement that lays claims to Morocco's Southern Provinces, known as The Sahara, a territory which Morocco had retrieved from Spanish rule under the Madrid Accord signed with Spain and Mauritania in 1975. A year later, Polisario lured thousands of Moroccan Sahrawis into joining it in the Tindouf camps where they have been held against their will ever since.

