



# Western Sahara on the Political Agenda in the UK

Western Sahara Campaign UK  
[www.wsahara.org.uk](http://www.wsahara.org.uk)

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# Background to the Campaign



- Sahara Action Committee formed following the 1975 invasion
- Western Sahara Campaign formed in 1985
- Aims:
  - awareness raising
  - support self-determination
  - human rights
  - humanitarian assistance
- Funding

# Setting priorities



- In 2007 the Campaign ran a review
- Concluded that WS would never be a mass campaign in the UK
- Decided that we should focus on political lobbying

# Political lobbying



- Our objective - to influence the UK government's position on Western Sahara.
- The UK has the potential to be influential
- In the EU the UK can help to counter the French and Spanish pro Morocco stance.
- Germany could make a significant difference

# Strategy



- Our over-riding objective is to move the referendum process forward
- We follow two strands: human rights and natural resources
- We attempt to influence the FCO and DEFRA respectively

# Methods



- How to influence the UK system
- Letters from supporters via MP
- The Minister must personally sign the reply

# FCO and other ministries



- It has taken 5 years to build up a good relationship with the FCO
- Regular meetings with Foreign Office officials
- The FCO Officer responsible for Western Sahara often comes to us for information

# APPG -MPs



- All Party Parliamentary Group on Western Sahara
- No formal ties to the Campaign
- Cross-party
- The APPG is another source of influence
- A delegation of the APPG recently visited the Occupied Territories



# Parliamentary Questions



- We suggest and/or write PQs for MPs
- It is a way of bringing a matter to the Minister's attention and getting it on the official record
- Replies are drafted by the FCO Desk Officer

# UNSC



- Human rights is now firmly on the agenda
- Over the Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) we urged the UK to talk to Germany before meetings
- If you can get Germany to work with the UK we can make WS the most contentious issue for the Council



# Thank you

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