

Excerpts of the speech of Aminatou Haidar concerning the role of international human rights organizations (page 3/4)

Because of the military, police and media blockade that encircles the occupied territories of Western Sahara and lead to ongoing high violations of human rights by the Moroccan state, because of this blockade the international human rights organizations were not able to visit the territory till 2001 though the presence of UN Mission for Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) there since 1991.

Many of these organizations played a great role in rising awareness about the human rights violations among the international community. These organizations also made the international community take full responsibility for those human rights violations, especially because it's taking part in a non-decolonized territory by a state that had signed many international protocols and accords, this state is also committed to implementing international justice and respecting human rights.

The most noticeable organization of those that I had mentioned above is Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, with whom I'm in a partnership since it honored me with Civil Courage Prize 2008. Kennedy Center played a great role in shedding the light on high human rights violations taking place in Western Sahara in the USA and abroad through well detailed reports or its visit to Western Sahara where the centre had eyed-witnessed the suffering of the Saharawi civilians, violations and confiscating of their civil, political, economic and social rights. Not only so much, Kennedy Center had made an international lobbying for the cause. And thanks to it, I was able as a human rights defender to meet some UNSC members, high ranking responsible in the UN, US Congress and both the White House and Department of State. Those meetings were for supporting the urgent of respecting human rights in Western Sahara. After the cruel attack against me and many other Saharawi human rights activists by the Moroccan state which reached its highest point in November, 13th 2009 when I was deported from El Aaiun airport into Lanzarote airport after confiscating my personal passport. As a protest against this forced deportaion from my homeland, I went in an open hunger strike for 32 days. Without the international solidarity, especially the lobbying that Kennedy Center and its chairwomen Kerry Kennedy had achieved, I won't be addressing you today.

For deceiving international public opinion and for hiding its crimes, the Moroccan regime is campaigning in a tendentious way against Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights as well as against all international and Moroccan human rights organizations that's taking position against the human rights violations in Western Sahara.

In that way, the king of Morocco addressed his people in November 2013, where he accuse international human rights defenders who had been visiting Western Sahara and reporting the human rights situation, he accused these organizations of subjectivity, lack of credibility, and more of bribery to distorts Morocco's image abroad. Immediately after this speech, the Moroccan authorities banned more than 50 foreigners from different nationalities to land in the territory who intended to visit Western Sahara and meeting human rights defenders, victims of human rights violations and families of Saharawi political prisoners.

As I'm here in deep-rooted Germany, I'd like to say that I feel grateful to Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights for defending human rights, peace and stability in the region and for defending the Saharawi people' rights, especially the right to self determination.

I'd like also to take advantage of this opportunity to ask hereby the German civil society to engage with commitment in supporting Saharawi civilians and human rights defenders and visiting Western Sahara to observe the brutality of the Moroccan state in violating human rights.

I hope also that the German civil society can act, both in Germany (on the government level) and on international level to pressuring Morocco to respect human rights and to subject to international justice and guarantee the Saharawi right to self determination through fair referendum. Because the reason of all these human rights violation is a result of confiscating the right to self determination (...)

Finally, I'd like to say thanks for giving me this opportunity to speak about human rights situation in Western Sahara which is in real need of an international action, not only from the international community under the head of UN and UNSC but the move of civil society: political parties, trade unions and human rights organizations. That action will absolutely lead to rescue a situation that's able to break out any time. A situation that's caused by the ongoing systematic violations against the Saharawi civilians by the Moroccan state, and because of the military, police and media blockade that encircled the region.

There is a political escalation by Morocco in the territory. In November the 6th 2014 the king of Morocco in his address threat the UN and crossed over the international legitimacy. He also threat every Saharawi citizen who is defending self determination of being traitor. That threat might lead to a real retreat of Moroccan state's commitment of respecting human rights, and threat to the civilians' right to protest and expression and their right to organizing and founding associations.

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