

***Universal Periodic Review 2016 : Morocco***

***Report submitted by Adala UK***

***The situation faced by Sahrawi children under Moroccan occupation in Western Sahara***

***The child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.***

***Preamble of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)***



**Adala UK**

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Adala UK is a UK-based NGO. We gather testimonies and evidence of human rights violations in the Occupied Territories of Western Sahara in order to:

- \* raise awareness among the British public and internationally of human rights violations committed against the Saharawi people living in the Occupied Territories;
- \* be a legitimate source of documentation of human rights violations committed against the Saharawi people;
- \* lobby international governments and inter-governmental bodies to put pressure on the Moroccan government regarding its policies that negatively impact on the human rights of the Saharawi population.

Our aim is to mobilise national and international support to hold the Moroccan government to account and change existing practices regarding human rights.

We collaborate with a growing number of human rights activists based in the Occupied Territories of Western Sahara and in Morocco, who provide first-hand accounts of the situation on the ground.

Annex – Testimonies of victims:

## **Arbitrary detentions, abductions, ill-treatment, torture, forced confessions**

### **2.2 Handcuffing; blindfolding**

[In a police station] “Yes, I was handcuffed for about four hours and I was in pain because the handcuffs were really tight. They kept me sitting there for four hours. My hands began to swell and turn blue.”

**Child 3 – 17**

[In a police station] “They handcuffed me for two hours and the handcuffs hurt me. My hands swelled and turned blue. I was terrified.”

**Child 4 – 14**

### **2.3 Physical violence**

[On the outskirts of the city of El Aaiún, on the edge of the Wad Sagia lake] “While two Moroccan officers were kicking and beating me, two others twisted my arms behind my back. I was screaming in pain and pleading with them to stop, but they didn’t stop and instead all four of them threw me to the ground. Then one of the Moroccan police officers punched me really hard on my temple which made me fall to the ground again onto all the stones.”

**Child 5 – 16**

[In a street in El Aaiún] “Suddenly one of the police officers threw a stone at my head; I fell to the ground and was kicked in the stomach and back by two police officers”.

**Child 6 – 13**

### **2.4 Threats and verbal abuse**

[El Aaiún] “We’ll go to your house and beat up all your family and you, and we’ll rape you if we ever see you again in the demonstrations by the Sahrawis”.

**Child 7 – 15**

“After he had hit me really hard, the policeman said to me: ‘If you say “Long Live Algeria” again, I’ll smash your head in’ – this was after a match between Algeria and Germany in the World Cup”.

**Child 8 – 4**

### **2.5 Interrogations without the presence of a parent or legal representative**

[In a police station] “They took me to a room in the police station. There, four men began questioning me. I was alone and no one from my family was

present, nor a solicitor. They wanted to know why I was throwing stones, who I was with and who sent me to the demonstrations”.

**Child 9 – 14**

“They took me by force and they interrogated me at the edge of the lake, on the outskirts of the city. Whilst they beat me they were asking me questions. I was on my own and no one from my family or anyone else was with me”.

**Child 10 – 16**

## **2.6 Confessions extracted during interrogation**

[In a police station in the occupied city of Smara] “In the end I told them that I was throwing stones. It wasn’t true but after being hit so much I just told them I did it so they would stop”.

**Child 11 – 14**

[In a detention centre, Boujdour] “He kept threatening that he would rape me. I was scared and I said ‘I only threw a stone’. He got up, came over to me and slapped me. I started to cry”.

**Child 12 – 17**

[In a police station] “I signed some papers. I hadn’t read what they put and they didn’t give me the opportunity to read it. Once I had signed it they told me that they could then put me in prison right then and there but that they would leave me until the next time I took part in a demonstration”.

**Child 13 – 16**

[In a police station] “Yes, I signed and wrote my name on 13 pages. It was written in French and Berber, I didn’t read what they put but they also didn’t let me, even though I wasn’t going to understand it because I don’t understand French or Berber”.

**Child 14 – 14**

## **Discrimination, Repression and ill treatment in schools and on the streets**

“All day long, four Moroccan police and auxiliary forces cars are parked outside the school... Whenever they see me walking in the streets with my schoolmates they start to say humiliating things to me and sometimes they get out of the car and slap me...once they punched me in the face and my nose bled a lot...and once they pulled my hair and told me that if they found me at a Sahrawi demonstration they would rape me”.

**Child 15 – 14**

(El Aaiún) “I was playing in the street with two friends on a Saturday afternoon when a police car with 5 agents stopped near us. My friends run away but I froze. They beat and kicked me, my jaw broke and I had a lot of blood falling from my mouth. I was in pain and very afraid as I heard the driver of the police car say: ‘beat him until he is dead!’”

**Child 16 – 8**

(El Aaiún) “I was coming home from school when 4 police cars stopped. The agents got out and started beating me. My sister heard me and came running but the police threw stones at her. They beat me with a bar, hands and batons and they kicked me. When I could no longer move they dragged me off my feet and threw me the floor repeatedly. I put my arm to protect my head and they broke my arm”.

**Child 17 – 13**