

RELEASE IN FULL

**Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, regarding Western Sahara and MINURSO, in the Security Council Chamber**

**Susan E. Rice**

*United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations*

U.S. Mission to the United Nations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thank you Mr. President.

The United States fully supports the Secretary-General and Ambassador Ross in their efforts to find a peaceful, sustainable, and mutually agreed solution to the Western Sahara conflict.

This conflict has gone on for too long. These ongoing strains, as well as poor relations between Morocco and Algeria, have prevented regional cooperation on urgent and emerging issues facing North Africa.

We very much welcome the appointment of Ambassador Ross to serve as the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for the Western Sahara. He's a seasoned diplomat with extensive experience in the region, and he has our full support.

During Ambassador Ross' recent trip to the region, all of his interlocutors confirmed their commitment to cooperate with the UN to reach a solution to the Western Sahara conflict as soon as possible. We welcome this news.

We also concur with Ambassador Ross' assessment that informal, preparatory talks may help pave the way for more substantive, formal talks. We are glad that the parties have agreed to meet informally, and we encourage all involved to come to the table without preconditions.

Given the current situation on the ground and Ambassador Ross' continuing efforts, we agree that the presence of MINURSO remains indispensable. The United States supports renewing MINURSO's mandate for another 12 months.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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