



مركز التفكير الاستراتيجي والدفاع عن الديمقراطية

Center for Strategic Thinking and Defence of Democracy

مؤسسة علمية مستقلة للدراسات والتحليل المستقبلية
independent scientific institution for future studies and analyses

Parallel Report to the Sixth Periodic Report of Morocco on the Implementation of the Provisions of Article 40 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Prepared by

Center for Strategic Thinking and Democracy and Defense of Democracy

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CHAPTER ONE

About Center for Strategic Thinking and Democracy and Defense of Democracy

One of North Africa's oldest conflicts is in the Western Sahara where multiple vying actors contest over the territory. The conflict has generated different levels of violations of fundamental human rights committed by involved parties. It has also affected the working conditions of non-governmental and human rights organizations who suffer tight control and lack of international funding. In view of these violations, an urgent need for the establishment of a non-governmental and independent organization has arisen. The aim was to empower the capacities of local human rights defenders, increase awareness of democracy and human rights values within a highly politicized and militarized society, and evaluate local public institutions and state policies with the purpose of ending or at least decreasing the violations against people. These are some of main objectives of the Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy which functions as an independent, non-partisan, non-profit and non-governmental organization located and founded in May 2006 in Laayoune by a number of academics from different disciplines who value democracy. The organization was registered with the local authorities in accordance to certificate number 1703/3 on 12 April 2007. The idea of creation of the CSTDD came in response to the urgent need for filling the gap related to the absence of universities and centers for scientific research as well as lack of free and constructive debate in the region of Western Sahara.

Following the failure of attempts made by the competing parties to end the conflict by means of war or legal avenues, the CSTDD positioned itself strategically working directly with Moroccan human rights organizations to offer a third way amidst highly polarized and conditioned civil society environment by focusing solely on the needs of the population while shifting away from political alliances, and promoting human rights approach in Western Sahara, accompanying and coaching the rest of organizations working in the region within their fields of specialization to help them efficiently better their performance.

The CSTDD has strengthened its presence and activities aimed at the enhancement of its strategic and institutional capabilities as well as the capacities of other civil society organizations of common interest in issues of democracy and human rights. In this regard, the center has given chance to more than 1500 members of similar NGOs as well as the staff of the center to participate in seminars, panel discussions and training sessions which focused on regionalization and patterns of decentralized governance within the framework of enhancing democracy to empower local people to run their own affairs, and through training sessions on human rights instruments and mechanisms for protection implemented at the national and international levels, the treaty practice of the Kingdom of Morocco in the field of human rights, the

acquisition of skills regarding monitoring , evaluation , documentation, preparation of memos and reports, and advocacy for issues relevant to protection of human rights¹.

This report is prepared by Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy (CSTDD) to be submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Committee. It is the first report on civil and political rights presented by the CSTDD from within Western Sahara. Bearing in mind the significance of this report as one the instruments to promote and support democracy in Western Sahara, we made sure to seek objectivity and credibility in the report.

The Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy considers its contribution to assess the sixth periodic report of Morocco on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as coherent with its objectives related to the defense of democracy and human rights as universal values based on the free will of people which is expressed through determining their political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of life in correlation with the democratic option, development and respect for human rights and freedoms, and which calls for considering dialogue as well as constructive and purposeful democratic debate as the best way to develop solutions to the crises whatever the difficulties and obstacles are.

Affirming that its participation in examining and discussing this report before the Human Right Committee in its 118th session, is to help enlighten the Committee on the human rights situation in the Western Sahara region since the conception of the Center in 2006 until the end of 2015 thorough an objective and independent assessment

The report makers agree to examine three articles of the Covenant to prepare, within available means, a reasonable narrative in accordance with the guiding principles on the content and format of standardized reports submitted by NGOs. The preparation of the report demanded a great Collective effort from members of the CSTDD who adhered, in their report, to the Committee's instructions with regard to the finalization of parallel reports which should be concise and analytical and focus on fundamental matters relating to the implementation of the relevant Covenant. In This regard, the CSTDD has made every effort to consolidate the provided data and guarantee the referral of basic information related to the target objectives about the protection of and promotion of the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Report is divided into three chapters as follows:

¹ See the document about the major activities of the Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy attached to the report

Chapter One:

- About the CSTDD and areas of work within the framework of civil and political rights.
- Introduction including methodology, progress achieved and obstacles in light of the previous government report.

Chapter Two:

Article (1) the right to self-determination

- The right to self-determination according to The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Moroccan legislation guaranteeing the right to self-determination in the light of the provisions of the Covenant.
- Constitutional and political measures practically enabling the exercise of right to self-determination

Article (14) the right to fair to trial

- The right to fair to trial according to The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Moroccan legislation guaranteeing the right to fair to trial in the light of the provisions of the Covenant.
- Constitutional and political measures practically enabling the exercise of right to fair to trial

Article (14) the right to Participation in the management of public affairs

- The right to Participation in the management of public affairs according to The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Moroccan legislation guaranteeing the right to Participation in the management of public affairs in the light of the provisions of the Covenant.
- Constitutional and political measures practically enabling the exercise of right to Participation in the management of public affairs

Chapter Three:

- Recommendations.
- Annexes

It is important to take note of the progress achieved and obstacles in light of the previous government report as follows:

a. Progress Achieved

By virtue of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the fifth periodic report of the Moroccan Kingdom in 2004; taking into consideration what was stated in the sixth periodic report of Morocco; based on the studies and consultations it conducted, the conferences it organized and the monitoring and follow-up processes, assessments and field observations it performed , the Center asserts the following:

Regarding the Moroccan legislation guaranteeing civil and political rights in light of the 2011 Constitutional reform

- Noting with satisfaction Morocco's submission of its sixth periodic report in the June 15, 2015
- Encouraging Morocco for promoting its status as a State Party in the fundamental human rights treaties and its approval to undertake extensive obligations in the field of human rights through harmonizing the constitution with international standards of human rights as follows:
 - Stipulating the primacy of international conventions over any national legislation (Preamble) stipulate
 - Prohibiting and combating all forms of discrimination (Preamble)
 - Criminalizing and prohibiting torture grave violations of human rights (Article 22 and 23)
 - Enhancing the status of fundamental rights and freedoms for all citizens (Article 19)
 - Stressing on the separation of powers (Article 19)
 - Ensuring the independence of the judiciary (Article 118)
 - Stressing on Fair trial and the implementation of presumption of innocence (Article 23)
 - Reinforcing advanced regionalization and strengthening of the roles and functions of territorial collectivities (Article One)
 - Participation of relevant population in the management of their affairs (Articles 30 and 136).

- Constitutionalization of independent and impartial election observation (Article 11)
- Supporting participatory approach and the status of civil society organizations (Articles 12, 14 and 15)
- Constitutionalization of national institutions of governance and human rights, including the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the National Human Rights Council, the Ombudsmen Institution, and the Inter-ministerial Delegation for Human Rights (Article 11)

Regarding the Moroccan legislation practically enabling the exercise of civil and political rights included the Constitution of 2011

- Encouraging Morocco for its opening up to the visits of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, following the 2011 Constitution, especially those who visited the Western Sahara region and for submitting initial and periodic reports to treaty bodies, including its sixth periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; considering these procedures and bodies as effective and efficient UN mechanisms to monitor Morocco's fulfillment of its international obligations in this area, including the Western Sahara region, which allows the creation of an interactive discussion between the State Party and the said monitoring mechanisms to promote respect of human rights in compliance with appropriate international standards;
- Acknowledging the continuous involvement of Morocco in the international human rights system, namely the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Punishment or Treatment, the initiation of the procedures of ratification or accession of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Child on individual communications;
- Noting the promulgation of Law relative to Military Justice by Morocco, which can in no circumstances refer civilians to military courts including civilian members of the Royal Armed Forces, or those who have committed crimes from the jurisdiction of military tribunals when members of the military are accomplices. Regulating the jurisdiction of military tribunals in peacetime; Speaking highly of this law in that it and has guaranteed the rights of litigants

to a fair trial, particularly through the creation of a new degree of appeal, which is consistent with Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the observations of the Human Rights Committee in its General Comment No. 32, particularly in paragraphs 8 and 22.;

- initiatives to promote respect of human rights in the Western Sahara, such as launching the process of transitional justice which included this region (searching for the truth and field investigation about violations that had occurred, providing material compensation and social integration to victims and their families, accepting the visits of Special Procedures since September 2011;
- Acknowledging the establishment of regional human rights commissions of the National Human Rights Council and regional delegations of the Ombudsmen Institution in 2012 to consolidate the monitoring of the human rights situation in the region;
- Commending the organization of training sessions in the field of security governance by the concerned governmental sectors and the National Human Rights Council since the beginning 2014). In addition, local authorities have become more tolerant with peaceful protests.;
- Welcoming the decision of the Moroccan government to examine and handle complaints submitted by the National Human Rights Council not later than three months, especially the complaints coming from the Western Sahara;
- Encouraging the implementation of the Constitution's provisions related to human rights through developing new draft laws on national institutions working on the protection of human rights, governance, development, territorial collectivities, political parties, civil society, justice system reform, press and publication laws, petitions and requests, and declaration of unconstitutionality;
- Acknowledging the promulgation of Law establishing the conditions and the terms independent election observation held on October 6, 2011;
- Commending Morocco for respecting the periodicity of competitive elections and the guarantee of the safety of the electoral process on the occasion of the organization of the House of Representatives elections in November 2011, which resulted in the formation of a coalition government led by the party who won a majority in these elections, the organization of territorial collectivities councils elections in September and the election of the members of the House of Councilors in October 2015;

- Noting with great interest Initiation by Morocco of adopting a new development model in the Western Sahara;

b. Matters of Concern

- ✓ Regretting the 7 year delay in submission of the sixth periodic report by the Kingdom of Morocco
- ✓ Expressing concern at the lack of progress towards the realization of the right to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara in conformity with the provision of Article 1 of the Covenant; recalling the concerns expressed by the Human Rights Committee in its concluding observation; especially the eighth observation on this issue, being recognizant of the stand of Morocco concerning the right of people to self-determination expressed in its sixth periodic report, which considers the implementation of the regionalization principle as decisive in executing the autonomy initiative presented by Morocco to the United Nations on April 11, 2007 and regarded by the Security Council in its Resolution n° 1754 as serious and credible.
- ✓ Expressing concern over the delay in the consideration of the cassation appeal submitted by the defendants arrested in relation with the « Gdim Izik » Events without referring them to civil courts despite Morocco authentication for nearly a year on the Code of Military Justice which excluded civilians from the jurisdiction of the military court, whatever the committed crimes are²
- ✓ Expressing concern over the persistence of certain human rights violations pertaining to limited cases of non-respect of legal regulation related to police custody, dispersing protests, establishing associations, enjoying some economic, social and cultural rights included in reports of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council following their visits³ to the area and reports of civil society organizations working in the field of human rights through their monitoring of the human rights situation in the region where they documented some cases of abuses, but they do not reflect constant and systematic violations⁴.

² The Moroccan cabinet held on 14 March 2014 approved new draft legislation regarding the military judicial system.

³ See reports of the Independent Expert on Cultural Rights, the Special Rapporteur on torture, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

⁴ See report of ombudsmen organization for democracy and human rights, the National Human Rights Body in Laayoune, The Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy, the Moroccan Observatory of Public Liberties, Alternatives Forum in Morocco, Adala Association, the Moroccan Human Rights Body, the Moroccan League for Human Rights, the Moroccan Organization for Human Rights.

- ✓ Expressing concern over the allegations included in the reports of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, Collective of Sahrawi Human Rights Defenders, Sahrawi Association of Victims of Grave Violations of Human Rights Committed by Morocco, Fondation Danielle Mitterrand/France Libertés, French Association of Friendship and Solidarity with African Peoples, and AdalaUK, with regard to the existence of human rights violations in the region⁵, and their demands of conducting independent monitoring of the human rights situation in Western Sahara.
- ✓ Expressing concern over the attempts to interpret the provisions of the Constitution of 2011 is contrary to international conventions ratified by Morocco

Directs the attention of the Human Rights Committee to the following :

CHAPTER TWO

Article 1 of the Covenant: the right to self-determination:

The first paragraph of Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

“All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”

As an organization interested in peace and democracy, The Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy stresses on the following:

- 1- Sovereignty and integration or separation and independence are not the only forms of self-determination appropriate for all peoples in the world. There are other forms of establishing countries which can be considered and justified⁶.
- 2- Seeking a resolution to this conflict is still negotiable in an atmosphere of building trust and cooperation away from exclusion and isolation. This means that the parties concerned with the Western Sahara dispute should set up more cooperation institutions on the local and regional levels through the Maghreb confederation united through a unique sense of belonging. This will ensure the implementation of the right to self-determination to the Western Sahara via a corporate governance system of the units and a common fate of the peoples.

⁵ Cited as an example: the trial of the defendants prosecuted in relation with the events of dismantling the Gdim Izik camp, continuing restrictions on associations defending the right to self-determination, prevention of peaceful protest, lack of access to natural resources by the population.

⁶ Resolutions of the General Assembly 1514 and 1541 of 1960 and 2625 of 1970.

- 3- The international experience aimed at establishing peace have proved that in any intuitive does not include or emanate from the base and target groups through a free, independent and impartial civil society would be an adventure with unknown consequences. The exclusion of the Sahrawi population in the discussion on all solutions before arriving thereto may open the region on various scenarios which may threaten international peace and security.

And by reference to the Moroccan legislation guaranteeing this right and their relevance to the article 1 of the Covenant, it is noted that:

Pursuant to the goals and principles of the UN Charter, the right to self-determination is a vital requirement for economic, social and cultural development of peoples. In this regard, with the aim of reinforcing an advanced decentralization and sustainable local development, the Constitution of 2011 approved advanced regionalization to achieve fundamental and profound reform in the state structures by giving extensive powers to the authorities with regard to the preparation of public policies and the implementation of territorial policies⁷, through the following:

- Article 1: “the territorial organization of the Kingdom is decentralized. It is founded on an advanced regionalization”⁸
- Article 135: “The territorial collectivities of the Kingdom are the regions, the prefectures, the provinces and the communes⁹” serving as territorial decentralized bodies which have a financial and administrative independence as well as legal and financial mechanisms and tools that enable them to play the mandated role at level of territorial development¹⁰.
- Article 143: “on the principle of free administration, of cooperation and of solidarity”. Also, the constitutional legislator assigned the regions first place in the arrangement of territorial collectives¹¹

In implementing the constitution’s provisions, three regulatory laws were drawn up: Regulatory law n° 14-113 on collectivities, Regulatory law n° 14-112 on councils of prefectures and provinces, and Regulatory law n° 14-111 on councils of regions.

⁷ Through its representation in the House of Counselors according to Article 137 of the Constitution

⁸ Fourth paragraph in the first chapter of the Constitution

⁹ The 2011 constitution tackled abundantly territorial collectivities as it devoted chapter 12 (articles 135-146) to it, in the contrary to the 1996 constitution which devoted only three articles to this subject matter

¹⁰ The 2011 Constitution defined territorial collectivities in its Article 135 as: “the regions, prefectures, provinces urban and rural communes”. The new part of this definition, as we said earlier, is the appellation of “territorial collectivities instead of local communities. This underscores the principle of dividing the Kingdom equally between the regions in all fields.

¹¹ Article 143

For Regulatory law n° 14-111 on councils of regions which is the cornerstone of these laws,¹² it comprises developments on implementing advanced regionalization. It stipulates that the region is to manage by itself its affairs on the basis of free administration, entitling the power to democratically negotiate, the power to implement its proceedings and decisions within the limits of its competences. It also stressed on the principles of cooperation and solidarity between regions and between the regions and other territorial collectivities.¹³ The law stipules the rule of direct regional council elections,¹⁴ positive action measures for women and opposition in electing the heads of regional councils¹⁵ as well as the principle of accountability.¹⁶

This law vested on the region general powers related to regional development and regional soil preparation, through improving the attractiveness of the territorial sphere of the region, strengthening its economic competitiveness, reaching a better use of natural resources, their valorization and preservation, adopting measures and actions encouraging businesses and its environment, working on facilitating the domiciliation of activities creating wealth and employment, contributing to human development, and improving managing capacities and training of human resources.¹⁷

Despite the fact that this law improves functions and capacities of the region, it has some shortcomings in terms of the restricted nature of the capacities of regions in regional development, the continuous administrative supervision of the local authority represented by the region's Wali; its non-adaptation with the needs and demands of the Sahrawi people and its expectations on the level of the establishment of the extended regionalization¹⁸ which will be one form of implementing the right to self-determination.

Although the United Nations admits the stalemate that the Western Sahara conflict knows and that it ensures stability for now, it acknowledged that it is an unacceptable and dangerous situation given the increasing risks of extremism, terrorism and organized crime in the Sahel. The continuation of this situation is likely to reignite violence which will result in catastrophic consequences for the Sahrawi population and North Africa.¹⁹

And by reference to the political and constitutional procedures practically enabling the exercise of this right within the UN settlement path, it is noted that:

¹² What concerns us in this regards is its relation to the right to self-determination

¹³ Article 4 of the Regulatory law

¹⁴ Article 6 of the Regulatory law

¹⁵ Articles 29 and 30 of the Regulatory law

¹⁶ Articles 49, 66, 67 of the Regulatory law

¹⁷ Articles 80 to 93 of the Regulatory law

¹⁸ The extended regionalization was the core of several speeches of the King Mohammed VI and recommendations of the Sahrawi civil society through its participation in conferences organized by the Center of strategic thinking.

¹⁹ Daily Bulletin of the United Nations, November 12, 2012, P : 4.

The Western Sahara dispute is one of the oldest conflicts still pending in the United Nations without finding a mutually agreed upon a solution by the concerned parties as it has lasted 40 years and passed through various stages:

- Morocco requested the United Nations to decolonize the Sahara from the Spanish colonialism
- Morocco organized the Green March to request the recovery of the region; Madrid Agreement was signed between Spain and Mauritania to divide the Sahara between Morocco and Mauritania
- Polisario front attacked Spain then Morocco and Mauritania, before the signature of the ceasefire agreement between Morocco and the Front in 1990, the United Nations settlement process through referendum was initiated.
- The execution of the settlement process has known several phases and developments in its turn, which resulted in the failure of the referendum procedure related to self-determination (unity or independence) given the difficulties that deterred its execution,²⁰ and which related to certain objections.
- In this respect, the Special Envoy of the Secretary General presented a draft framework agreement aiming at finding a quick, durable and equitable settlement,²¹ which was supported by the Security Council in resolution n° 1359 on June 29, 2001. In this context, Algeria and Polisario proposed the division of the Western Sahara, while Morocco expressed its desire to negotiate to find a political solution and refused the idea of territorial division.²²
- Given the divergent views, the Security Council rendered its solution n° 1429 on July 30, 2002, in which he requested his Special Envoy to find a peaceful and final settlement to the dispute prior to the end of January 2003, stressing that the absence of a conflict resolution hinders the process of economic development in the Arab Maghreb and that seeking a political solution has become mandatory.
- In implementing this resolution, the Special Envoy visited the region in January 2003 and presented a new plan,²³ which includes proposals related to the implementation of the former settlement plan. Algeria and Polisario accepted

²⁰ United Nations Secretary General Report on July 12, 2000 pointed out the obstacles and challenges in the implementation of the settlement plan.

²¹ Secretary General report on June 20,2001

²² Secretary General report on February 19,2002

²³ See Secretary General Report S/2003/565 on May 23,2003

this proposal after refusing it for a long period, whereas Morocco rejected it on the grounds of inapplicability, as its guidelines are derived from the former settlement plan which proved impossible to execute.²⁴ Although this plan was supported by the Security Council,²⁵ it has become ineffective due to the refusal of one of the parties.²⁶

- At this juncture, the Security Council resolution n° 1541 was submitted on April 29, 2004, underscoring the importance of seeking a negotiable and mutually acceptable political resolution, which led the Special envoy to resign. The Special Representative of the Secretary General and the head of the MINURSO was appointed to further political mediation between the parties and neighboring countries to find a “just, definitive political solution that is satisfactory to all parties”.²⁷

The settlement plan has helped on the humanitarian aspect of the dispute through:

- Releasing prisoners of war (POW) from both parties
- Ensuring that there were no disappearance cases in the Western Sahara through the Red Cross in November 2001.²⁸
- Phone calls and letters exchange were made possible for Sahrawi people and Tindouf camps residents in 2003
- Family visits exchange in 2004.²⁹
- The Moroccan Autonomy Initiative in June 2007, the submission of Polisario of its proposal for a dispute settlement in May 2007 have created a new dynamism in the UN settlement path through:
- Stressing the need for negotiations between the parties to find a just, definitive political solution that is satisfactory to all parties.³⁰
- Welcoming the serious and credible Moroccan efforts that aim at moving ahead with the process towards settlement.³¹
- Stressing the importance of improving the human rights situation in these two regions and urging the parties to work, with the international community, to

²⁴ See Secretary General Report S/2003/565 on May 23, 2003

²⁵ Its Resolution n° 1495 on July 31, 2003

²⁶ Included in the Secretary General Report S/2004/325 on April 23, 2003

²⁷ See letter addressed by the Secretary General to the Security Council in June 11, 2004

²⁸ Statement of the International Committee of Red Cross n° 1/45 on November 15, 2001

²⁹ In implementation of Security Council resolutions n° 1429 and 1495

³⁰ Resolution n° 1754 on April 30, 2007, Resolution n° 1783 on October 31, 2007, Resolution n° 1813 on April 30, 2008, Resolution 1920 on April 30, 2010, Resolution n° 1979 on April 27, 2011

³¹ Security Council Resolution n° 1979 on April 27, 2011

set and implement independent and credible measures to guarantee full respect for human rights.

- Welcoming the creation of the National Human Rights Council and its regional commission, the commitment of Morocco to ensure the unconditional and unrestricted openness to Special Procedures
- Welcoming the implementation of the promotion of refugee protection program by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in coordination with the Polisario Front, which will include training initiatives in the fields of human rights and human rights education, in addition to the request addressed to the Commissioner to continue its consideration of the refugee registration process in the Tindouf refugee camps, to urge to establish family visits by land, and continue existing program of family visits by air.³²

Article 1 of the Covenant: the right to self-determination:

The second paragraph of Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

“All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence”

As an organization interested in promoting human rights, the Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy stresses on the following :

First: notifying that lack of access to international funding and cooperation for the Western Sahara creates Continuous blockade and deprivation of rights

- The Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy noticed that although this province is safe and peaceful following the United Nations commendable efforts to ceasefire in 1990 and the negotiations undertaken to find a peaceful, fair and definitive solution to this issue, it still marked by an acute polarization since the two parties are preoccupied by finding this solution according to their stands to which they mobilized support bases. Consequently, the Sahrawi population- the main target of this solution- lags behind on the political, economic and social development levels in spite of the undeniable efforts made by the Kingdom of Morocco in this regard. Nevertheless, these efforts, by themselves, are not enough;

³² Secretary General Report on April 27, 2011

- The continuous drying up of official or non-governmental international funding and support and the exclusion of this province for more than 40 years there from hinder the creation of a free, independent and conscious civil society and democratic civil elites that believe in plurality, openness, and tolerance and are capable of taking decisions in a free and impartial way
- With this constant inhuman and illegal situation which violates their basic legitimate and human rights fundamentals, Sahrawi people are deprived from:
 - knowledge acquisition, technical and scientific research through granting fellowship
 - Creating partnership to promote cooperatives and businesses
 - Civilian programs and projects to build a politically mature and economically, socially and psychologically stable population to assume the historic responsibility of the democratic opinion that they will provide and will definitely affect the future of the next generations³³

This depriving situation in which the Sahrawi population lives will aggravate the stalemate in finding a political solution to the current quagmire and will result in serious social problems such as tribal discrimination, political and religious extremism, corruption and illicit enrichment, unwillingness to participate in public affairs especially among youth and women, increase in unemployment rates and weakness of a productive structuring private sector.

Calling attention of the international community to the gravity of the continuing of the lack of access of Sahrawi people to international and UN support for 40 years. This anomalous situation is regarded as a blatant violation of the supreme principles of international human rights instruments and their purposes. It also denies the minimum requirement of equality between human beings. Meanwhile, Sahrawi refugee camps in Tindouf are granted international development subsidies and Moroccan civil society, outside the province, also benefit from UN support and official and unofficial international and UN humanitarian, scientific and technical programs, just like any other people in this world.

The Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy, calls upon all States parties to the Covenant to take positive action consistent with the obligations of States under the Charter of the United Nations and international law to enable the realization of the right to self-determination in Western Sahara, and particularly the

³³ Memo sent to Christopher Ross, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy by the Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy, available at: <http://en.crsdd.org/2016/02/09/memo-sent-to-christopher-ross-the-secretary-generals-personal-envoy-by-the-center-for-strategic-thinking-and-defense-of-democracy>

international donors and international development cooperation agencies to participate in development efforts in the Western Sahara by creating opportunities international funding and support related to:

- Disseminating human rights culture, encouraging the participation in democratic processes,
- Political and economic empowering of youth and women,
- Enabling local cooperatives and businesses
- Encouraging knowledge and scientific research, building and strengthening the capacities independent civil society.
- Calling upon the specialized agencies of the United Nations, its relevant funds, governmental and nongovernmental local organizations to develop initiatives for raising awareness and training
- Promoting democratic dialogue based on respect of differences, plurality, acceptance of others in the Sahrawi society,
- All initiatives aimed at providing favorable environment for dialogue to reach an advanced stage in negotiations, thus ensuring the implementation of pertaining UN resolutions to resolve this long-lasting problem³⁴.

Article 14 of the Covenant: the right to fair trial:

The first and the fifth paragraph of Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

“All persons shall be equal before the courts and tribunals. In the determination of any criminal charge against him, or of his rights and obligations in a suit at law, everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law. The press and the public may be excluded from all or part of a trial for reasons of morals, public order (ordre public) or national security in a democratic society, or when the interest of the private lives of the parties so requires, or to the extent strictly necessary in the opinion of the court in special circumstances where publicity would prejudice the interests of justice; but any judgement rendered in a criminal case or in a suit at law shall be made public except where the interest of juvenile persons otherwise requires or the proceedings concern matrimonial disputes or the guardianship of children”.

³⁴ Memo sent to Christopher Ross, the Secretary-General’s Personal Envoy by the Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy available at <http://en.crsdd.org/2016/02/09/memo-sent-to-christopher-ross-the-secretary-generals-personal-envoy-by-the-center-for-strategic-thinking-and-defense-of-democracy>

“Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law”.

As an organization interested in achieving justice, the Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy, together with five organizations working in the field of the human rights and democracy, namely « Adala » (Association for Justice), le « Médiateur pour la démocratie et les droits de l'homme » (the Mediator for Democracy and Human Rights), l'« Instance Marocaine des Droits Humains » (the Moroccan Body for Human Rights), le « Centre de réflexion stratégique et de défense de la démocratie» (Centre for Strategic Thinking and Fighting for Democracy) and l'« Observatoire marocain des libertés publiques » (the Moroccan Observatory for Public Liberties), have formed a team of observers with the mission of monitoring the stages of the trial of the 25 defendants prosecuted in relation with the events of dismantling the Gdim Izik camp on November 08, 2010 and appearing before the military court of Rabat in a trial that lasted 10 days ((from) February 1st, 2013 until late in the night of the 17th of the same month),

And by reference to the Moroccan legislation guaranteeing this right and their relevance to the article 14 of the Covenant during the case of Trial of the 25 defendants prosecuted in relation with the « Gdim Izik » Events, it is noted that:

Despite the competence of the Military Court to rule on this case, pursuant to Article 3 of the Military Justice Code, the system of this court, in terms of human rights, is incompatible with the Moroccan commitments part of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in particular Article 14 as for :

- Ensuring the benefit from the various avenues of recourse provided for by civil courts.
- The principle of equality of all citizens before the law, which is stipulated by the 1st of July 2011 Constitution as it is underlined in Article 11.
- Elimination of any special court likely to undermine this principle. In fact, nor military neither civil persons appearing before a military court do enjoy the same rights recognized by the other criminal courts for similar charges.
- Breaching the rights of the defendants who cannot in this case appeal 1st degree rulings, and to those of victims' families who cannot constitute themselves as plaintiff before a military court³⁵

³⁵ Observers' Preliminary Report on the Trial of the 25 defendants prosecuted in relation with the « Gdim Izik » Events available at: <http://en.crsdd.org/2016/01/30/observers-preliminary-report-on-the-trial-of-the-25-defendants-prosecuted-in-relation-with-the-gdim-izik-events>

And by reference to the political and constitutional procedures practically enabling the exercise of this right and their relevance to the article 14 of the Covenant during the case of Trial of the 25 defendants prosecuted in relation with the « Gdim Izik » Events, it is noted that:

➤ **On the public nature of hearings**

- The presiding judge persistently reminded the principle of publicity of hearings and that of the presumption of innocence all along the stages of the trial (hearings, debate and pleadings), in presence of the defendants , their relatives, the victims' families, as well as journalists and observers (local, national and international organizations, academics) ;
- The defence did not make any recourse on the publicity of hearings, except its remark on access of all relatives of the defendants to the court room, knowing that families had required the admission to the court room of all members of the defendants' families, their relatives and friends. In this regard, the court fixed at thirty the number of family members of the defendants and of the victims to be admitted to the court room. Thus, during the first session held on February 1st, 2013, the hearing was attended by: Diplomatic representatives (Switzerland, UK, Spain, USA, Canada ...), National and international media, independent, party and semi-public print press, audiovisual, e-media ;Observers representing national and international associations; Moroccan and foreign lawyers and academics.

➤ **On the Rights of Defence**

- The presiding judge had largely accepted the defence questions to the defendants as well as to witnesses. He did neither interrupt without reason the statements, nor limited the duration of the pleadings. The defence had the right to answer to all recourse means presented by the prosecutor. The prosecutor did not object the request of the defence as to displaying the seized objects and summoning witnesses. He did not either ask for fixed sentences.
- The presiding judge accepted the defence request to hear five (5) witnesses for the defence. But only one (1) of the nine (9) prosecution witnesses was heard. The court accepted to display the seized objects.
- The defence had the possibility to communicate with the defendants during the hearing.

On the other hand, the court rejected the following requests:

- Incompetence of the court;

- To order a medical expertise on the defendants to shed light on the allegations of torture, and rape related to 4 of them and taking prints on the seized objects.
- To hear as witnesses some officials and a member of parliament.

Concerning the Defendants, the following remarks stood out:

- The defendants entered the court room non-handcuffed pursuant to Article 84 of the military justice Code, and shouting political slogans demanding self-determination. While hearing them by the court, the accused expressed their opinions without constraint. Generally speaking, the presiding judge court did not interrupt the defendants when those spoke³⁶.

a. Progress Achieved

- The amendment made by Morocco, as a State Party, to the Covenant of the Code of Military Justice which provided for restricting the jurisdiction of the military court to include purely military misdemeanors, which can in no circumstances refer civilians to military courts, limiting the subject matter and the personal jurisdiction of military to crimes committed in peacetimes committed by military or paramilitary personnel.
- Regulation of the special provisions involving the referral of civilians to the military court regardless of who they are or the nature of the offense they committed in times of peace, whether they are conspirators or accomplices and the transfer of military and paramilitary personnel to the ordinary court in circumstances of committing crimes against public order
- Amendment of the special provisions to refer the perpetrators of crimes against external state security to the military court and make these crimes from the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts.
- Reorganization of the legal nature of the military court to comply with the principles of the Constitution and human rights standards by categorizing the military court as an independent and specialized court with two Appeals Chambers to resume consideration of misdemeanors and felonies³⁷

b. Noticeable Regression of Human Rights

- Expressing concern over the delay in the referral of civilian defendants prosecuted in relation with the « Gdim Izik » Events to the civil court pursuant

³⁶ Observers' Preliminary Report on the Trial of the 25 defendants prosecuted in relation with the « Gdim Izik » Events available at: <http://en.crsdd.org/2016/01/30/observers-preliminary-report-on-the-trial-of-the-25-defendants-prosecuted-in-relation-with-the-gdim-izik-events>

³⁷ Law 108-13 Relative to Military Justice

to the Chapter 218 of the 1108-13 law, which stipulates that the file of civilians who have not finished their trial before a military court shall be forwarded, by force of Law, to the civil court after the change jurisdiction following of the entry into force of this Act to the Bureau of Investigation that has become competent without any further action³⁸.

Article 25 of the Covenant: Participation in the management of public affairs.

The first and the fifth paragraph of Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

"Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

“(a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;(b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors; (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.”

As an organization interested in promoting and sensitizing people of the values of democracy and human rights , the Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy, affirming that:

In spite of the stalemate that the Western Sahara dispute UN negotiations know, the Security Council in its latest Resolution n° 2218/2015 on April 28, 2015 stressed on the need for the parties of the conflict to respect human rights and expand the margin of liberties. In this context, the organization of territorial collectivities elections in Western Sahara can be considered as a democratic rehearsal enabling the Sahrawi people to choose their representatives freely and impartially. In addition, it can also be regarded as a standard to measure the extent to which the country is fulfilling its international obligations ensuring the integrity of elections.

These local and regional elections, organized in the Western Sahara on September 04, 2015, are the first local elections after the establishment of the 2011 Constitution and the regulatory laws of these elections which resulted in establishing advanced regionalization through choosing elected bodies and councils.

And by reference to the Moroccan legislation guaranteeing this right and their relevance to the article 25 of the Covenant, it is noted that:

³⁸ Observers' Preliminary Report on the Trial of the 25 defendants prosecuted in relation with the « Gdim Izik » Events available at: <http://en.crsdd.org/2016/01/30/observers-preliminary-report-on-the-trial-of-the-25-defendants-prosecuted-in-relation-with-the-gdim-izik-events>

The Constitution also includes numerous articles stipulating equality in civil and political rights between men and women,³⁹ and provides for the ordinary lawmaker to set forth provisions that ensure a better participation for women.⁴⁰

As for local democracy, legal reforms, which were drawn up to implement the Constitution, contain remarkable measures in positive action measures for women⁴¹ which culminate the process of applying quota system for women in legislative elections on November 25, 2011, stipulated in the regulatory law of the House of Representatives. The latter drew up a national list for women and youth allocating 60 seats to women, twofold of the number of seats reserved for women in the former parliament according to the quota system, and 30 seats for youth under 40 years.

And by reference to the political and constitutional procedures practically enabling the exercise of this right and their relevance to the article 25 of the Covenant, it is noted that:

The latest constitutional reforms made by Morocco in and after 2011 harmonized the legal framework regulating the elections with international instruments on democratic elections.

For the first time in Morocco, a governmental committee was established to monitor elections and consisted of the Minister of Interior Affairs and the Minister of Justice and Liberties with the direct supervision of the Prime Minister. This committee demonstrated its impartiality, independence and transparency during these elections through a series of precautionary and disciplinary measures to guarantee the neutrality of the authority, its interaction with complaints and publication of measures taken by Moroccan public prosecutions.

These elections have marked the involvement of 34 NGOs and 4024 women and men observers including local observers from Western Sahara to monitor the Moroccan election

On the basis of field observations related to the local elections that the Centre for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy carried out on September 4, 2015 in some place in the Western Sahara, it is noticed that

a- Progress achieved

- These elections also noticed an increasing interest of Sahrawi people in the participation in public affairs through their involvement in elections and

³⁹ Articles 19 and 30

⁴⁰ Article 146

⁴¹ Amendments applied by virtue of Regulatory law n° 34.15 modifying and completing regulatory law n° 59.11 on electing members of territorial collectivities in terms of strengthening positive action measures mechanisms aiming at supporting women representation in the councils of territorial collectivities.

consultations organized by the public administration and institutions,⁴² in this regard, the participation rate in the polling in the Western Sahara varied between 60% and 70%, whereas at the national level it did not surpass 53.67% for all regions.⁴³

- Western Sahara has known free and competitive local and regional elections which were conducted in a peaceful atmosphere⁴⁴, with limited calls for boycott through the distribution of few pamphlets in Laâyoune city. Nevertheless, these calls did not reach rural collectivities and did not affect its participation rate which was one of the highest rates in these first time elections, since the participation rate stood at more than 80 % in the rural collectivities of Laâyoune province.
- the registration of electors progressed smoothly in administrative buildings, and filing nominations process also was fluent
- The positive action measures for women helped to increase their nomination rate in rural collectivities by 35%. 4 seats were allocated in each collectivity out of 15 seats.
- These elections witnessed an increase in the participation of young people, whether as voters or candidates. Young people under the age of 35 rates were 29.40% and 26.89 of the nominations of the local and regional elections respectively⁴⁵
- New candidates represented 78.8% and 64.3% of local and regional election nominations respectively, whereas Women's nominations stood at 21.94 % at the local elections level and 38.64% at the level of regional elections.
- The electoral process and did not witness ant attempt against the freedom of journalists to cover the campaign.
- The Election Day went peacefully and orderly in different polling stations, in an atmosphere of respect and safety.
- The results of local elections show the presence of 15.028 new local electoral candidates, nearly half of total number of candidates.⁴⁶ At the level of

⁴² The highest participation rate in the elections of territorial collectivities was about 60% to 70 % while it stood at 52% at the national level. The participation in the constitutional referendum reached more than 90 %.

⁴³ Statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

⁴⁴ In This regard, see reports of the Centre for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy and of the National Human Rights Council and of civil society on the observations of the 2015 collectivity-based and regional elections. (34 non-governmental organizations were chosen and 4024 observers from both sexes to observe the election across Morocco).

⁴⁵ Domestic Election Observation : Preliminary Statement by CSTDD available at :

<http://en.crsdd.org/2016/01/30/domestic-election-observation-preliminary-statement-by-cstdd/>

⁴⁶ According to the statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

regional election and according to the same source, the number of new regional electoral candidates reached 242, nearly the third of the total number of the candidates.

- The ratio of New candidates, who have never run for any election, was 72 %. Also, candidates with high or secondary educational level reached 82%.⁴⁷

b- Noticeable Regression of Human Rights

- The governmental committee to monitor elections was not regionally or locally represented.
- The phenomenon of inheritance and the prevalence of family and tribe relations and the presence of the sons of the notables or the sons of former candidates were noticed.
- At the level of spending, the election did not notice excessive expenditure in election campaigns in view of the absence of electoral meetings, rallies, processions and the weakness of electoral propaganda in these collectivities.
- Official regional audio-visual media did not cover the electoral campaign. They did not provide candidates with platforms to present their local electoral programs. On the other hand, some electronic newspapers noted a few irregularities regarding the electoral process.

⁴⁷ Domestic Election Observation : Preliminary Statement by CSTDD available at : <http://en.crsdd.org/2016/01/30/domestic-election-observation-preliminary-statement-by-cstdd/>

Recommendations

Regarding Article 1 of the Covenant: the right to self-determination:

- Calling the Moroccan authorities to grant the Sahrawi people an extended decentralized governance of the Western Sahara in the form of extended regionalization gradually leading to autonomy, which guarantees the ongoing participation of people in public affairs and helps them to assume responsibility in an atmosphere of integration, balance and solidarity.
- Calling Morocco to increase the region's political, economic, social and cultural development, to preserve the Islam and the Maliki doctrine, to be keen to benefit of the people of the region from its natural resources;
- Calling Morocco to protect the safety and security of the Sahrawi people and respect their will, that they only possess within the framework of constitutional bodies and representative institutions, regardless of other collectivities which claims the sole and legislative representation, to guarantee the region's economic and social development, to preserve the Islam and the Maliki doctrine, to be keen to benefit the people of the region from its natural resources;
- Calling Morocco to work on instilling peace and safety values and strengthening principles of democracy, human rights and governance in the Western Sahara as it is universally recognized, including ensuring the implementation of the right to self-determination,⁴⁸ when the people of the Sahara is able to assume its results and consequences.⁴⁹
- Calling Morocco as State Party to the Covenant to protect the safety and security of the Sahrawi people and respect their will, that they only possess within the framework of constitutional bodies and representative institutions that guarantees the political pluralism , regardless of other collectivities which claims the sole representation

⁴⁸ According to the second general recommendation of the committee on the elimination of racial discrimination, this does not always mean compromising the territorial integrity of the State. The Committee emphasizes that, in accordance with the Declaration on Friendly Relations, none of the Committee's actions shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States. The Commission considers that international law did not recognize a general right of peoples to unilaterally declare separation from a country, adding that the fragmentation of states could prejudice the protection of human rights.

⁴⁹ Whether by integration, autonomy, federation or a confederation or even independence that the region and the population cannot assume its results and consequences

- Morocco should comply with international human rights standards related to human rights grievance redress mechanism
- Moroccan government should strengthen positive action measures for women and interest in categorical rights and integrating human rights approach in regional and territorial public policies in Western Sahara.
- Calling Morocco to strengthen the position and the role of grievance redress mechanisms regionally, especially the regional commissions of the National Human Rights Council and the delegates of the Ombudsmen institution;
- Calling Morocco to establish regional observatories for human rights to monitor violations of human rights and assess objectively, impartially and independently the situation of human rights;
- Calling Moroccan government to create fulcrums in governmental sectors in charge of receiving and handling human rights complaints;
- Urging Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council to keep visiting the Western Sahara, as it is the only United Nations mechanism capable of conducting specialized and impartial monitoring of the human rights situation in the region, away from any political exploitation to the process of monitoring of the human rights situation to serve political agendas of the parties of the conflict;
- Moroccan government should execute the principle of administrative and criminal accountability of all direct security forces in Western Sahara they are proved to abuse power⁵⁰.
- Moroccan government should adopt security governance by creating regional mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation regarding resort to security forces in Western Sahara.
- Calling upon States Parties to Covenant to take positive action that would guarantees the incorporation of Western Sahara in the list of the regions targeted by funding and international cooperation.

Regarding Article 14 of the Covenant: the right to fair trial:

- Moroccan judiciary should refer the defendants prosecuted in relation with the « Gdim Izik » Events to civil courts according Article 218. Law (No. 108-13)

Regarding Article 25 of the Covenant: the right to Participation in the management of public affairs.

⁵⁰ For more details see the proposals of Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy about the region of Sahara with regard to the government program directed to the prime minister and general secretaries of Moroccan political parties belonging to the coalition government, Laayoune 04 January, 2012 available at : <http://crsdd.org/125.html>

- Calling Morocco as State Party to the Covenant to guarantee the right to Participation in the management of public affairs in Western Sahara
 - Establishing solidarity and decentralized cooperation between territorial units in the Sahara region as it is considered as an efficient territorial governance mechanisms, rationalizing exploitation of the region's available resources and natural resources to serve the development of and promote the situation of its people.
 - Working on an equitable distribution of the wealth and restore the tax fees extracted from outside the regions of – Laayoune Sakia El Hamra and Dakhla-Oued Ed-Dahab.
 - Setting up an integrated system of control and integrity at the local level and regarding it as an integrated system of mechanisms and guarantees in which the financial judiciary plays a monitoring role at the level of public finances and in which the criminal justice performs checking and criminal accountability.
 - Establishing a system of territorial governance in relation to advanced regionalization and the decentralized governance model to instill the pillars of the local democratic system in which qualified, competent and integrated elected people manage the public affairs based on serious programs and fight all attempts to prejudice elections' integrity and competitiveness;
 - Strengthening positive action measures for women and youth in the coming legislative elections (October 2016), encouraging political actors to present female and young candidates whether for parliament seats or for political offices, setting up educational and awareness raising programs on women's rights in elections, fighting all negative stereotypes on the political and managing capacities of women;
 - Promoting the participation of disabled people in public affairs through harmonizing national laws with international standards, taking measures to facilitate the appropriate access of this category to elections and local representative institutions, developing a quota system for them, taking into consideration visual and hearing disabilities in elections, strengthening the presence of disabled people in the proposals and programs of political parties, providing proposal forms for disabled people;
 - Taking care of the situation of returning Sahrawi people from Tindouf camps and integrating them in public life through facilitating their participation in public affairs and ensuring their access to jobs, positions and public policies;
 - Creating a specialized team of independent and impartial observation in Western Sahara;

- Broadening the scope of civil observation to incorporate the national and international bodies and taking into consideration their reports into consideration in evaluating the electoral process so as to benefit them in future experiences.
- Providing training and continuous training for elected people and administrative officers to promote the creativity and leadership in local management through investing in local accompanying mechanisms and instill the principle of local governance, transparency and accountability.
- Enabling human resources to accompany regional works and meet the challenges of the implementation process, through establishing basic training structures, namely a university.
- Working on the preservation of the Hassania Language and Sahrawi identity and respect the cultural economic and social cohesion of the Western Sahara in the Moroccan public policies and in local development programs.
- Upgrading economic knowledge in the Western Sahara as it is considered an important source to produce wealth at the local level and as a contribution to the Sahrawi wealth.
- Allocating a part of public support to associations and research centers and training labors in the Western Sahara to encourage research and public discussion on civil and political rights, supporting the monitoring of violations of these rights, upgrading the capacities of civil society;
- Implementing the direct, serious and integrated role of civil society in raising the awareness of the public opinion on the importance of the protection of public funds and rationalizing and controlling their use and implementing transparency and integrity mechanisms to achieve local governance.
- Strengthening dialogue, partnership and consultation mechanisms between territorial collectivities and local Sahrawi civil society enabling it to develop, implement and assess local public policies;
- Supporting the establishment of civil alliances and drawing up working proposals and platforms on the participation of citizens in the local governance.

Annexes

- The 2011 Moroccan. Constitution
- Dahir (Royal Decree) No. 1-14-187 of 25 Rabii I 1436 A.H. (10 December 2014) on the creation of Justice Law
- Law No. 30.11 about the conditions and the terms independent election observation held on October 6, 2011.
- The proposals of Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy about the region of Sahara with regard to the government program directed to the prime minister and general secretaries of Moroccan political parties belonging to the coalition government.
- Memo submitted to Christopher Ross, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy by the Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy
- Synthetic reports by Center for Strategic Thinking and Democracy and Defense of Democracy included in "Strategic Booklets Series", First booklet about "Regionalization"
- Synthetic report by Center for Strategic Thinking and Democracy and Defense of Democracy on "treaty practice of the Kingdom of Morocco in the field of human rights"
- Preliminary statement by Center for Strategic Thinking and Democracy and Defense of Democracy on domestic Election Observation of the 2015 communal election in Laayoune
- Paper about the major activities of the Center for Strategic Thinking and Defense of Democracy attached to the report