

Western Sahara: Unrest as Moroccans trash protest camp

Monday 22 November 2010, by [GUY Ron](#) (Date first published: 14 November 2010).

Moroccan occupation forces brutally attacked and destroyed the Saharawi Gdeim Izik protest camp on November 8, which had grown to over 20,000 since being established on October 9.

The camp, 15 kilometres outside the capital, El Aaiun, was established to protest lack of job opportunities for Saharawi under the Moroccan occupation and mistreatment of Saharawi by Moroccan authorities.

Western Sahara is considered a non-self-governing territory by the United Nations and has been waiting for its long promised vote of self-determination since before Morocco invaded in 1975, following the withdrawal of the former colonial power, Spain.

An estimated 19 Saharawi were killed, 723 wounded and 159 went missing when the camp was destroyed and unrest spread in El Aaiun. Saharawi independence front Polisario accused Morocco of destroying Saharawi homes and businesses in El Aaiun.

On October 24, a 14-year-old boy was shot and killed while bringing in water and food to the camps, which the Moroccan police and army had surrounded in an attempt to starve protesters out.

Bulldozers had pushed up earth around the camp so that movements could be controlled by the Moroccan authorities.

Spanish, French and European MPs and dozens of journalists were prevented from visiting the area in an attempt to stop independent media from covering the protest.

Moroccan authorities claim that 8 policemen were killed.

In 2009 and 2010, France vetoed a vote to give UN peacekeepers the power to monitor human rights abuses that both parties accuse each other of.

Australia imports phosphate from the region, which is illegal according to the Hans Corell 2002 UN legal opinion.

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P.S.

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