

## Western Sahara: UN envoy concludes North Africa tour



[A member of MINURSO's Military Liaison Office chats with a group of Western Saharans](#)

26 October 2010 – Christopher Ross, the United Nations envoy for Western Sahara, has wrapped up his fourth visit to the region ahead of the next round of informal talks, which are expected to be held in early November.

The informal talks are held in accordance with Security Council resolution 1871, which called on the parties to continue their dialogue under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General without preconditions to achieve “a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.”

Fighting broke out between Morocco and the Frente Polisario after Spanish colonial administration of Western Sahara ended in 1976. Morocco has presented a plan for autonomy while the position of the Frente Polisario is that the territory’s final status should be decided in a referendum on self-determination that includes independence as an option.

While in Morocco, the last leg of his visit, Mr. Ross had an audience with King Mohammed VI, with whom he discussed the political situation in the region, the need to overcome the status quo, the requirements of the negotiating process, and confidence-building measures, according to a UN spokesperson.

They also touched on the urgent need to lower the tension that exists in the region and to avoid anything that could spoil the atmosphere or complicate progress at the next round of discussions.

Mr. Ross said that, on his four stops on this tour – in Algiers, the Tindouf region, Mauritania, and Morocco – officials had confirmed their full readiness to support the efforts of the UN in general and his mission in particular.

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