

Question for written answer E-010109/2015
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Fernando Maura Barandiarán (ALDE)

Subject: VP/HR - United Nations investigation into Moroccan lobbying

A United Nations report accuses the Moroccan government of spending millions of dollars in an attempt to influence officials at the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights and prevent it from paying proper attention to the serious humanitarian situation facing the people of Western Sahara as a consequence of Moroccan occupation. The investigation found that Morocco had used this strategy of bribery through donations to persuade the UN to cancel fact-finding missions to the area, prevent the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (Minurso) from receiving a mandate to monitor human rights violations (a mandate generally given to all UN peacekeeping missions), and prevent any condemnation of the Rabat government's systematic refusal to allow the UN to hold a referendum on self-determination in the last colony in Africa, a referendum which the Moroccan government has been blocking since 1991.

The UN report focuses on the Moroccan ambassador Omar Hilale who, before becoming Morocco's ambassador to the UN in New York, played a key role in the Moroccan lobbying campaign as secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and Moroccan representative in Geneva, when he sought to undermine the Polisario Front and Algeria by making serious allegations concerning the misappropriation of humanitarian aid, for example. The success of this diplomat's unscrupulous lobbying has sparked an anxious debate in New York on the vulnerability of UN agencies to undue interference by third parties seeking to advance their own interests.

1. Will the Vice-President/High Representative ask the United Nations for information on this scandal in which Moroccan diplomats have played a leading role?
2. Can the Vice-President/High Representative say what guarantees European citizens have that European Union officials and bodies have not been affected by the illicit activities of Moroccan diplomats?