

**Question for oral answer O-000061/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 136

Dominique Bilde

on behalf of the ID Group

Subject: European Union humanitarian aid for refugees in the Tindouf camps run by the Polisario Front

The Polisario Front, a political-military organisation in the Western Sahara which was founded in 1973, has established its base in Tindouf Province, Algeria, where it runs a number of refugee camps.

In 2015, a report by OLAF, covering the period 2003-2007, revealed that the Front had misappropriated European humanitarian aid in the camps. This misappropriation is said to have played a part in the purchase of arms.

Conditions for the refugees living in the camps were described as extremely difficult, particularly because of the coronavirus.

Both the Front and Algeria are said to have refused the repeated requests by the UNHCR, in 1977, 2003, 2005 and 2015, to carry out a census of the refugees in the Tindouf camps, the number of whom is alleged to have been overstated. However, Algeria is said to have levied a 5% tax on the European aid.

1. Will the Commission conduct an enquiry into the misappropriation and make future humanitarian aid for the Tindouf camps conditional on Algeria and the Polisario Front agreeing to a census of the refugees, who are supposed to benefit from the aid?
2. Will the Commission conduct an enquiry into the health response of the Polisario Front to the COVID-19 pandemic in these camps and the living conditions of the refugees?

Submitted: 30/09/2020

Lapses: 31/12/2020