

Security Council extends mandate of UN peace mission in Western Sahara by six months

The United Nations Security Council, on Wednesday, extended the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), until 30 April next year.

Adopting resolution 2240 (2018), by a recorded vote of 12 in favour and 3 abstentions, the Security Council underscored the need for a “realistic, practicable and enduring political solution” to the question of Western Sahara.

In that context, the 15-member Council expressed “full support” for the Secretary-General’s plan to initiate renewed negotiations before the end of 2018 and urged all parties to resume dialogue, in good faith, towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, “which will provide for the self determination of the people of Western Sahara.”

Originally [established](#) in 1991, in accordance with settlement proposals accepted in 1988 by Morocco and the Frente Polisario movement, [MINURSO](#) was tasked with the monitoring of the ceasefire; overseeing the exchange of prisoners of war; repatriation of refugees; and the eventual organization of a free and fair referendum in which the people of Western Sahara would choose between independence and integration with Morocco.

While the organization of the referendum has not been possible to date, other requirements of the mandate have been pursued successfully and the peacekeeping mission continues to monitor the ceasefire, conduct mine clearance operations, and supports confidence building measures.

MINURSO has also been providing assistance to irregular migrants as well as humanitarian assistance in case of natural disasters.