



Invitation Discussion Forum

**Self-determination delayed:
The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic**

27 February 2017 (National Day)

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The Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, together with the Embassy of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, cordially invites you to a brown bag lunch-hour panel discussion on the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people.

Date: 27 February 2017 (Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic National Day)
Time: 12:30 – 13:30
Venue: Exhibition Space, Engineering I, University of Pretoria (Hatfield Campus)
RSVP: [PLEASE CLICK HERE TO RSVP ONLINE](#)
RSVP deadline: 23 February 2017
Enquiries: Ms Thuto Hlalele (012 420 3587 / thuto.hlalele@up.ac.za)

Panelists

The following panelists will introduce in discussion:

- **Ambassador Radhi Bachir**, Ambassador of the Sahrawi Republic to South Africa
- **Ambassador Ebrahim Saley**, Deputy Director General: Global, Governance and Continental Agenda, Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)
- **Mr Jose Nascimento**, Lawyer and International Law Expert

About the Lecture

In the aftermath of the visit in January this year by the President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) to South Africa, and attempts of Morocco to be re-admitted to the African Union (AU), a discussion on the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people is most timely.

The SADR (also known as the 'Western Sahara') is a disputed territory in the Maghreb region of North Africa. The area was under Spain occupation until 1975, when Spain relinquished administrative control of the territory to a joint administration by Morocco and Mauritania. A war erupted between those countries and the Sahrawi national liberation movement, the Polisario Front, which proclaimed the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Mauritania withdrew in 1979, and Morocco eventually secured *de facto* control of most of the territory, including all the major cities and natural resources. The AU's predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), expressed itself in favour of the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people, and in 1982 admitted the SADR into the OAU. Morocco, up to that time a member of the OAU, in 1984 withdrew its membership.

The United Nations (UN) has been seeking a settlement in Western Sahara for many years. In 1991, the UN Security Council decided to establish the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). MINURSO was to oversee the implementation of the organization of a referendum in which the people of Western Sahara would choose between independence and integration with Morocco. To date, this referendum has not taken place, mainly due to the obstructing role of Morocco.

The AU has largely left the matter to be resolved by the UN. The discussion aims to raise awareness and increase the understanding of the plight of the people of the Saharawi Arab republic.

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