

To the attention of: Mr. **Manan Goel**,
Joint Managing Director, GP Global Group,
formerly Gulf Petrochem.

Brussels, 24 April 2020



Re: GP Global import of butane into occupied Western Sahara

Dear Mr. Goel,

We, at Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW), present you with our compliments. We are writing to you to enquire about your company's import of gas into the Non-Self Governing Territory of Western Sahara.

WSRW has been monitoring trade in and out of Western Sahara for the past decade. As you may know, Western Sahara is today known as the Africa's Last Colony. It was a Spanish colony until 1975, when Spain relinquished its authority over the territory, and Morocco moved its troops in violation of an International Court of Justice ruling, as well as numerous United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

Western Sahara is regarded by the United Nations as a Non-Self Governing Territory, which still awaits decolonization, and one without a legally accepted administering power in place. Its people, the Saharawi, have been accorded the right to self-determination - a right restated in now more than 100 UN resolutions, but the exercise thereof is continuously being blocked by Morocco. The war between the Kingdom of Morocco and Frente Polisario has resulted in a military division of the territory and a ceasefire that is being monitored by the UN.

The part of Western Sahara that is under control of the Polisario Front – the Saharawi liberation movement – hosts the administrative institutions of the Saharawi Republic (the SADR), which is recognized by over 80 countries worldwide – including Nigeria, Panama, Mauritius, Uganda, Mexico, South Africa, among others – and a full-fledged member of the African Union. Note that there is not a single country in the world that recognizes Morocco's claims to Western Sahara.

Meanwhile, Morocco continues to trample the most basic human rights of Saharawis that live under the yoke of its occupation. Approximately 200.000 Saharawi refugees continue to live in inhumane conditions in Algerian refugee camps, located in the most inhospitable part of the Saharan desert, due to the illegal occupation.

The United Nations, the International Court of Justice and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) all state that Morocco does not have any legal basis, sovereignty or international mandate to administer the territory. Legal opinions from the United Nations, as well as separate CJEU rulings also state that economic activities in Western Sahara have to fulfill a paramount legal prerequisite in order for any such activity inside or affecting occupied Western Sahara to be permissible under international law: consent must be obtained from the Saharawi people. This means that the Saharawi people must consent to any commercial activity taking place on their occupied homeland.

The name of your company has come to our attention as the LPG tanker *Gas Cerberus* (IMO 9507740) transported butane into the territory on 20-21 April 2020 at the port of El Aaiún (or Laayoune in French).

Your company is the client of that butane, according to a letter which the Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara received from the Norwegian exporter Equinor on 24 April 2020. https://vest-sahara.s3.amazonaws.com/skvs/feature-images/File/104/5ea2dfce782a_Equinor-SKVS_24.04.2020.pdf

In its letter, Equinor expresses regret at having agreed to the sale of the cargo without taking into consideration the Norwegian government policy advice on the matter. It also states such export will not take place again.

Given the GP Global lists “Integrity” as one of its key values, we would appreciate an immediate response to the following questions from our organisation:

1. When did GP Global import its first cargo into the occupied territory of Western Sahara?
2. Since then, how many shipments has GP Global imported into Western Sahara?
3. What entity in Western Sahara is the customer for this particular cargo onboard the *Gas Cerberus*?
4. Before the agreement with Equinor was signed, did Equinor enquire from GP Global clarifications whether your organization had obtained permission from the relevant Saharawi authorities to carry out imports into their territory?
5. What due diligence has GP Global carried out prior to this butane import specifically, and to operations on the occupied territory in general?
6. We observe that GP Global has and seeks business opportunities in several countries where the question of Morocco’s occupation of the

territory is high up on the political agenda. How does GP Global consider the reputational risk involved for your company to be involved when facilitating the Moroccan occupation of the territory of Western Sahara?

7. As a corollary of the internationally recognized right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, and given the legal requirement of obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of the people of Western Sahara with regard to activities or projects in their land –as put forth by several UN Treaty bodies and the EU Court of Justice – what steps, if any, has GP Global taken to obtain the consent of the people of Western Sahara to import gas to Western Sahara?

Through contributing with gas supplies to Moroccan interests in Western Sahara, in our opinion, GP Global today contributes to entrenching the Moroccan approach to the conflict through critical Moroccan industries on the ground.

Western Sahara Resource Watch is convinced that it is not in the interest of GP Global to become associated with the continued colonization and occupation of Western Sahara, neither by the provision of petrochemical services or the transport of shipments which may help legitimize the Moroccan military occupation of the territory, and will thus hinder the peace process.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(sign.)

Sara Eyckmans
Coordinator
Western Sahara Resource Watch

Copy of this mail is sent to:

- Tor Martin Anfinnsen, SVP Marketing & Trading
- Nicolas H. Vafias, President, Stealth Maritime Corp SA