

Equinor
Att: Tor Martin Anfinnsen,
SVP Marketing & Trading



Oslo, 25.04.2020

REGARDING GAS DELIVERY FROM KÅRSTØ TO OCCUPIED WESTERN SAHARA

The Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara wishes to thank you for your letter of 24 April 2020 as a response to our letter to CEO Eldar Sætre on 21 April 2020, regarding Equinor's exports of gas from Kårstø to occupied Western Sahara this week.

We would like to thank you for the clarification that your company from now on will align with the Norwegian government's advice on Western Sahara, so that no further such exports to the territory will take place.

Furthermore, we appreciate your clarification that a 'standard due diligence process' was carried out prior to the signature of the contract and your clarification regarding Stenungsung that we referred to in our letter.

However, apart from that, your letter does not respond to our questions. In view of the serious nature of the incident, and the damage that this export inflicted on the Saharawi people, please be advised that we would appreciate a speedy response to the questions that were not answered, particularly the following:

1. Did your agreement with the client *explicitly* extend to providing supplies to Western Sahara?
2. Does Equinor, as a matter of policy, carry out due diligence on its clients' human rights policies and practices?
3. 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 Equinor taken to obtain the consent of the people of Western Sahara to export gas to Western Sahara?

Both Equinor and its purchaser have an obligation to respect human rights – not only to check if a port of imports is enlisted on registries of sanctioned harbours. A due diligence process would normally include investigating whether an activity is made in respect of fundamental human rights.

The Saharawi people have what international law refers to as ‘permanent sovereignty’ over the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara, and their right to self-determination is a human right. Based on this, we would like an answer to the following questions, that were not part of the previous letter.

4. Are the human rights part of the ‘standard due diligence process’ that your company undertakes prior to signing a contract?
5. If yes, how did the due diligence process relating this export incident to Western Sahara conclude on the *right to self-determination* and the obligation of Equinor and its partner to obtain consent from the people of the territory?

It is our clear opinion that both the exporter and the importer in this case have had an obligation to respect the Saharawi people’s human right to give its consent prior to the shipment.

Due to your previous letter’s lack of clarifications regarding Equinor’s correspondence vis-à-vis its purchaser, our partner Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW) last night made contact with GP Global to ask whether such enquiry was made by Equinor. The letter to GB Global can be accessed here: https://vest-sahara.s3.amazonaws.com/skvs/feature-images/File/108/5ea3e3ed414e9_20200424WSRW-GP.pdf

A letter was today sent by WSRW Greece and our association to the vessel’s operator, Stealth Corp: https://vest-sahara.s3.amazonaws.com/skvs/feature-images/File/109/5ea3fd4c987_WSRWSKVS-Stealth_25.04.2020.pdf

For future reference, Equinor’s above-mentioned letter to us dated 21 April 2020 can be found here: https://vest-sahara.s3.amazonaws.com/skvs/feature-images/File/104/5ea2dfce782a_Equinor-SKVS_24.04.2020.pdf

A copy of this mail is sent to:

- Jan-Tore Fosund, director-general, Ownership Department, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
- Trine Lise Sundnes, Head of department for international affairs, Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions
- Sigmund Lier, mayor, Municipality of Tysvær
- Knut Thorvaldsen, Director-general, Norwegian Oil and Gas Association
- Randi Viksund, Head of communication, Gassco
- Manan Goel, Joint Managing Director, GP Global Group
- Nicolas H. Vafias, President, Stealth Maritime Corp SA

Sincerely

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