REGARDING METALEX VENTURES OPERATIONS IN OCCUPIED WESTERN SAHARA

Dear Mr. Ulansky

Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW) is privileged to write to you. We are writing with regard to the very problematic joint-venture that your company has with ONHYM in occupied Western Sahara.

For a number of years, we have observed that your company has been announcing mineral exploration operations in “Morocco”. We take it for granted that you well aware that your partnership with ONHYM is not at all for an area located in Morocco.

The baseless Moroccan claims to the territory are not recognized by the UN, the EU, the ECJ, the ICJ or the African Court of Human and Peoples Rights – nor by the government of Canada.

As you probably know, Morocco illegally annexed part of Western Sahara by military force in 1975 in violation of the basic right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. This military invasion was condemned by the United Nations General Assembly and to this day, Western Sahara remains listed by the UN as a Non-Self-Governing Territory, pending a decolonization process. On international rankings, such as by Freedom House, Western Sahara scores lowest in the world on political freedoms. Leading human rights defenders from Western Sahara, including the general-secretary of the association that would normally take part in monitoring foreign controversial business operations on their land, are currently serving life-time sentences in Moroccan jails.

In line with the International Court of Justice, the Court of Justice of the European Union has outlined, in five separate rulings, that the Government of Morocco does not have any legal basis, sovereignty or international mandate to administer the territory. The recent court rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union have also made it clear that in the event of an entity undertaking business in Western Sahara, consent must be obtained from the people of Western Sahara. It stated that the two territories of Morocco and Western Sahara are ‘separate and distinct’.
A joint-venture for mineral exploration with ONHYM in Western Sahara fundamentally contributes to entrenching the illegal Moroccan occupation.

We would appreciate a response to the following questions:

1. Will Metalex Ventures adhere to basic corporate responsibility and support fundamental human rights by terminating its partnership with the Moroccan government on the lands that it holds under foreign occupation?
2. In the meantime, will Metalex Ventures ensure the immediate correction of the false information on your website, which currently suggests that you have operations in “Morocco”?
3. How does Metalex Venture consider the legality of its operations, considering that it has signed the joint-venture with a government that has no legal right to be present in the territory?
4. Why has Metalex Ventures chosen to ignore the legal status of Western Sahara as separate and distinct from Morocco, and the right to self-determination of the Saharawi people?

Western Sahara Resource Watch is convinced that it is not in the interest of Metalex to become associated with continued occupation and war in Western Sahara, and urge your company to immediately halt further engagement in the territory.

We strongly condemn your company’s lack of respect of the very elementary right to self-determination of the Saharawi people, and, in this time of Christmas, wish to express our deep disappointment over your company’s contribution to the continued sufferings of the Saharawi people.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards
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