



(MINURSO, 2018)

## New UNSC Resolution on Western Sahara; New US Policy on the Muslim Brotherhood

26/04/2019-02/05/2019

*Two countries in the region have received major international endorsements for some of their most sensitive policy issues. In a rare instance, a new UN Security Council Resolution passes on the Western Sahara to the approval of Morocco. With the change in US policy towards the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt has carried out further trials of Brotherhood members on charges of terrorism.*

*Meanwhile, the complexities of France's position in Libya have become increasingly highlighted, Tunisia has been hit by another scandal about bad workplace practices, Algeria's army has publicly intervened regarding issues of new elections and corruption, and Mauritania's administration continues to shift its formation with Presidential elections only a month away.*

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## Algeria

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There has been calls from the Algerian army for dialogue with State institutions in order to find a way out of the current political crisis (*Le Point*)<sup>1</sup>. In this context, the Chief of Staff of the National Peoples Army, and Deputy Defense Minister, Ahmed Gaid Salah has reiterated the need for Algeria to “hold elections as soon as possible” as an “ideal way out of the crisis” (*Jeune Afrique*)<sup>2</sup>.

Salah was also quoted as saying he “has proven information on a number of serious corruption cases revealing facts of theft of public funds” (*L'Économiste.com*)<sup>3</sup>. In this latter context, former Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia was interviewed by authorities on suspicion of “squandering public funds” (*FRANCE24*)<sup>4</sup>.

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## Egypt

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Following the US change in designating the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group, an Egyptian court has sentenced seven Muslim Brotherhood members, including one of the groups top financiers, to life in prison on charges of joining and funding a terrorist group (*Fox News*)<sup>5</sup>. For their part, the group has responded by saying they will continue “peaceful” work regardless of the change in US policy (*Egypt Independent*)<sup>6</sup>.

President Sissi has reportedly met with officials in Russia and China to review international issues and develop new international partnerships on key areas (*Egypt Independent; Al Monitor*)<sup>7</sup>.

In other news, there have been reports of an increase in violence against minority Christian populations in Egypt, leading to an increase in Church closures and for many Coptic populations to leave the country (*Paris Match*)<sup>8</sup>.

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## Libya

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Key international actors including Russia and Turkey have called for a ceasefire between conflicting parties in Tripoli (*The Libya Observer*)<sup>9</sup>. The Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) has rejected any ceasefire agreement with Haftar’s forces, unless those forces completely withdraw from the capital (*The Libya Observer*)<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/algerie-l-armee-appelle-au-dialogue-avec-les-institutions-de-l-etat-pour-sortir-de-la-crise-01-05-2019-2310339\\_24.php](https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/algerie-l-armee-appelle-au-dialogue-avec-les-institutions-de-l-etat-pour-sortir-de-la-crise-01-05-2019-2310339_24.php)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/769235/politique/algerie-le-general-gaid-salah-veut-des-elections-le-plus-tot-possible/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://leconomiste.com/flash-infos/algerie-gaid-salah-fait-etat-de-dossiers-de-corruption-lourds>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.france24.com/fr/20190430-algerie-ouyahia-puissants-ere-bouteflika-inquietes-justice>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/world/islamist-financier-6-others-get-life-sentences-in-egypt>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.egyptindependent.com/egypts-muslim-brotherhood-says-it-will-continue-peaceful-work-regardless-of-trump-moves/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.egyptindependent.com/sisi-putin-discuss-returning-russian-flights-to-egypt/>; <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/04/egypt-china-belt-and-road-initiative-forum-investments-trade.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.parismatch.com/Actu/International/Le-harcelement-des-chretiens-d-Egypte-1620816>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/russia-turkey-call-cease-fire-libya>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/gna-reaffirms-rejection-cease-fire-tripoli-invaders>

The UN Special Envoy to Libya, Ghassan Salame, has spent some of this week addressing the international stance of France in Libya. Following explicit calls against backing Haftar's campaign (*FRANCE 24*)<sup>11</sup>, he was reportedly informed that France still supports the GNA "but does not ignore the role of retired Major General Khalifa Haftar in the fight against terrorism" (*Middle East Monitor*)<sup>12</sup>.

Meanwhile, following a lull in the fighting and a resumption in migrant boat departures, the Libyan coast guard has reportedly stopped 113 migrants from attempting to reach Italy (*Reuters*)<sup>13</sup>.

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## Mauritania

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There have been new appointments in the Mauritanian government. Via Presidential Decree, the Presidency of Mohamed O. Abdel Aziz announced the appointment of Sidi Mohamed O. Bouna to the post of chargé de mission to the presidency (*Sahara Medias*)<sup>14</sup>. The Prime Minister, Mohamed Salem O. Bashir, also nominated a chargé de mission and a Security Advisor to his cabinet, Yabed O. Hanena and Dehbi O. Jafar respectively (*Sahara Medias*)<sup>15</sup>.

President Aziz also participated in an extraordinary summit of the G5 in Ouagadougou this week (*CRIDEM*)<sup>16</sup>. And contender in the upcoming Presidential elections, Sidi Mohamed O. Boubacar officially submitted his candidacy file to the Constitutional Council for approval (*L'Authentique*)<sup>17</sup>.

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## Morocco

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Following a new UN Security Council Resolution on the Western Sahara, Morocco reacted warmly, endorsing the new vote, as opposed to the discrete reaction of their disputed opponents, the Polisario (*Yabiladi*)<sup>18</sup>. During said-vote, however, Russia and South Africa expressed their disapproval through abstention (*Le360*). The vote also renewed the mandate of MINURSO, the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, for a further six months until 31 October 2019 (*Yabiladi*)<sup>19</sup>.

In other news, a new report has singled out Morocco as the country in North Africa with the highest disparities in inequalities across the entire international region (*Le Monde*)<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/20190429-un-libya-envoy-warns-against-backing-strongman-haftar-tripoli>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190430-un-libya-envoy-france-says-haftar-has-a-role-in-fighting-terrorism/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/libya-coast-guard-detrains-113-migrants-during-lull-in-fighting-idUSKCN1S73RT>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.saharamedias.net/fr/mauritanie-nomination-dun-chargé-de-mission-a-la-présidence/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.saharamedias.net/fr/mauritanie-des-nominations-au-premier-ministère/>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.cridem.org/C\\_Info.php?article=722931](http://www.cridem.org/C_Info.php?article=722931)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.lauthentic.info/Politique/article/Présidentielle-2019-Ould-Boubacar-depose-son-dossier-auprès-du-conseil>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/77769/sahara-premieres-reactions-resolution-conseil.html>

<sup>19</sup> <http://fr.le360.ma/politique/sahara-la-russie-et-lafrique-du-sud-ne-votent-pas-la-resolution-du-conseil-de-securite-189250>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/77757/sahara-sans-concensus-mandat-minurso.html>

## Tunisia

There were reports of the deaths of 12 farm workers in a high-profile accident, reviving a debate in Tunisia about regional inequalities (*BBC*)<sup>21</sup>. Following these deaths, reportedly 5,000 Tunisians demonstrated in Sidi Bouzid, the symbolic birthplace of the 2011 revolution, against the marginalization of their region (*Le Figaro*)<sup>22</sup>.

In other news, a new international forum has called for the release of UN representative Moncef Kartas, who was imprisoned in Tunisia under accusation of spying for foreign powers (*RFI*)<sup>23</sup>. Also, Tunisia and Italy have signed seven cooperation agreements, including for a new “electric bridge” to be built between Sicily and Tunisia (*Jeune Afrique*)<sup>24</sup>.

### About:

*This is a weekly, non-exhaustive snapshot of regional, and international news regarding the politics of the North African region. Selections demonstrate varying perspectives and opinions from French, Arabic and English media sources. Taking such an approach enables regional trends to be observed and documented so they may be used and applied in our detailed research projects.*

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<sup>21</sup> [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/05/01/le-maroc-pays-le-plus-inegalitaire-d-afrigue-du-nord\\_5457031\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/05/01/le-maroc-pays-le-plus-inegalitaire-d-afrigue-du-nord_5457031_3212.html)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/afrique/region-48101181>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/tunisie-manifestation-apres-la-mort-de-douze-ouvrieres-agricoles-20190429>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/769332/economie/tunisie-italie-sept-accords-de-cooperation-signes-lors-du-premier-sommet-intergouvernemental/>

## BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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