



*Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference III  
Saturday, January 31 to Sunday, February 1, 2015  
Boston University Academy  
Boston, MA*



***Joint Committee Crisis 3  
(JCC3):  
Western Sahara***

***Background Guide***

## ***Welcome to Joint Crisis!***

Dear Delegates,

My name is Jason Silvestri and I am a senior at BU Academy. At last year's BUAMUN, I very much enjoyed playing the role of fate as the Chief of Joint Crisis Committees, and I'm very excited to continue working in the same role this year!

For those of you who don't know what a "joint crisis committee" is, it is essentially a fast-paced, more action-oriented version of a Model UN committee. The idea of a Joint Crisis Committee was first pioneered in collegiate-level Model UN conferences and is now implemented on a large scale throughout many college and high-school level MUN conferences worldwide to provide both a more intense and competitive arena for debate among delegates and an opportunity to simulate the inner workings of individual countries' cabinets and smaller-scale international relations. In a Joint Crisis Simulation, there are several committees that are all linked through some common issue. Each delegate represents a specific member of his/her country's cabinet and works both on an individual level, making use of the crisis staff for anything that is tangentially pertinent to the crisis simulation (be it anything from direct orders for the delegate's ministry within the simulated government to written "points of information" to request more detailed facts and figures about the rapidly-changing situation in the simulation). I myself have participated in several crisis committees at collegiate high-school level conferences and have run many crisis-committee simulations for BU Academy's Model UN travel team, in addition to running our (infamous) South America JCC last February. I hope you all enjoy this year's BUAMUN JCC, and on that note I'm proud to present this year's JCC scenario.

The BUAMUN 2015 JCC will be centered on the Maghreb: that is, Morocco, Algeria, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (also known as Western Sahara, or the SADR for

short). The area of Western Sahara is a highly-contested territory on the Atlantic coast, south of Morocco and north of Mauritania. It, along with much of Morocco, was colonized by the Spanish until the 1975, when, during an international initiative to decolonize Africa, Spain left the two colonies to their own devices; Morocco almost immediately annexed the colony of *Rio de Oro*, or Western Sahara, as it had an official claim to the land since 1957, and an unspoken ancestral claim to the land before then. Then, in the 1990s there was an intense military conflict between Morocco and the ethnically Sahrawi rebels in the south of Morocco. The Polisario Front, which was the leading paramilitary militia group of the Sahrawi rebels was largely funded by the neighboring nation of Algeria. This caused tensions to build between Morocco and Algeria, and a proxy war was fought between them over Western Sahara until peace was brokered by the international community in the late 1990s. Ethnic tensions still are present to a high degree in the area, and one small act of aggression could spark conflict in this tumultuous corner of the world. To make matters worse, around 90,000 Sahrawi refugees still remain in refugee camps in Algeria, awaiting a window for safe return to their homeland in Western Sahara.

Best of luck and happy researching, and as they say in the Maghreb, *incha'*

*Allah* (hopefully) you will find a way to keep the delicate peace in this year's JCC simulation!

Sincerely,

Jason Silvestri

Director of JCCs

[jcc@buamun.org](mailto:jcc@buamun.org)

## *Letter from the Chair*

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to BUAMUN III! My name is Dheekshita Kumar, and I will be your chair for JCC Western Sahara. I am currently a junior at Boston University Academy and have been involved with Model UN since my freshman year. In addition to my involvement with Model UN, I am a captain of the science team, a member of student council, and an active participant in anything that involves music or theater. My vice chair, Alex Perry, is also a junior, and he and I are looking forward to meeting all of you! I am excited to see what this committee will do to gain international recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic as an independent nation. In addition, we will also seek to prevent numerous violations of human rights and maintain stability within the territory.

In committee, we will follow a modified version of parliamentary procedure which we will review before the session. If you have any questions feel free to contact me!

Looking forward to seeing you all,

Dheekshita Kumar (16')

[westernsahara@buamun.org](mailto:westernsahara@buamun.org)

## ***Crisis Committee Flow of Debate:***

*Adapted from Phill Giliver, 2013*

Crisis committees at BUAMUN and other conferences work differently from “regular” General Assembly (GA) committees. Crises follow a less formal flow of debate, and generally remove many of the elements of parliamentary procedure. Delegates must still raise placards to speak, and must follow the standards of diplomatic politesse; however, elements of debate such as speakers’ lists and moderated/un-moderated caucuses are mostly done away with. Motions for caucuses on specific topics are encouraged, but crisis debate generally runs like a never-ending moderated caucus. This structure is adopted because during a crisis simulation, events and crises can progress rapidly, and a full implementation of parliamentary procedure would only slow delegates’ ability to respond to fast-paced happenings.

There are 3 general measures that delegates in a crisis committee can perform:

1. **Directives:** formal action undertaken by a committee or an individual on a committee.

Directives can contain any *reasonable* action and may be drafted by any delegate on a crisis committee (for example, a directive can declare war on another nation; however, it may also ask the other nation to attend bilateral treaty negotiations). After a draft is written, delegates submit directives to the chair. The chair will then read the directive, at which point delegates can motion to alter the directive or to vote on it.

In some cases, delegates may send private directives to the chair, also known as **portfolio action**. This type of directive depends on the purview of the delegate’s position. For example, the chief of a nation’s intelligence agency may order the secret detainment of a known terrorist. Likewise, the minister of energy for a nation may choose to cut energy agreements with another nation. Conversely, a minister of culture may not unilaterally

declare war, nor may the minister of education impose economic sanctions on another nation, etc.

2. **Press Releases:** formal statements from a committee detailing an action or a committee's stance or opinion. For example, if a committee representing the United States decided to attack Canada (absurdity intended), the committee could issue a Press Release telling the world that they have chosen to break all economic and trade ties with Canada and launch full scale war. Similarly, if the US waged war on Canada, a committee representing the United Kingdom could issue a Press Release condemning the US's action.
3. **Communiqués:** informal communication between individuals or committees. For example, if a committee representing Iran chose to send information to the leader of Hezbollah (a terrorist organization represented on a Lebanese committee), it could do so in a communiqué, and only the addressee would receive the information. Similarly, two economic ministers (for example, of Australia and the UK) could be communicating without anyone else's knowledge through communiqués.

The crisis chairs and crisis staff will inform you of any additional actions that you may take; they will also make sure that no delegate's actions are out of order.

Crises occur rapidly and often throughout the course of crisis simulations—be prepared to think on your feet and to enact whatever measures you and your fellow delegates feel are necessary, and most importantly, have fun!

## ***Introduction to Committee***

The crisis simulation will be run as part of BUAMUN's Joint Crisis: Maghreb, and will feature three separate countries, each represented in our simulation by a committee: Algeria, Morocco and Western Sahara. This committee will represent Western Sahara; as the chair, I will assume the role of the Polisario Front's Secretary General, Mohamed Abdelaziz. Each delegate will be a member of the Polisario Front and, although debate will consist of cooperative discussion that leads to unified decisions, individual delegates will possess portfolio powers, which can independently move the simulation forward. Delegates will receive portfolio powers before the first committee session. In committee, rather than defaulting to a speaker's list if there are no procedural motions or points, we will default to a moderated caucus.

## ***Position Paper Information***

All of the BUAMUN joint crisis committees require policy papers from each delegate. Policy papers are short pieces of writing indicating a delegate's stance that contribute to a chair's perspective regarding awards. A policy paper should be approximately 1-2 pages, double spaced, and should include a short introduction to the topic, the delegate's past and present positions on the topic, relations with the other countries in the simulation, and proposed solutions. You should probably conduct additional research to write this paper. See the "Suggestions for Further Research" section at the end of this guide, for helpful researching resources. Please label the policy paper with the following header format (This is only an example of the header format— you should each modify this with your own name, school, and assigned position):

Delegate: Dheekshita Kumar  
School: Boston University Academy  
Committee: Western Sahara Joint Crisis  
Position: Secretary General/ Mohamed Abdelaziz

Although there are three topics, I will be expecting only one policy paper describing the relations between Western Sahara and one of the other nations.





## *Historical Background*

### *Colonization to the Beginnings of the Polisario Front*

In the late 1800s, several European countries including England, France, Spain, and a couple others were trying to colonize different parts of Africa. Between 1884 and 1885, about 14 countries attended a conference, known as the Berlin Conference, where they decided amongst themselves the division of the territories. The area that we call the Western Sahara was put under Spanish rule. The sultan of Morocco at the time, Sultan Hassan I, tried to prevent the European conquest of the territory. Eventually, in 1912, Morocco too became a protectorate, a state that is



controlled and protected by another, of Spain and France.

In 1956, Morocco gained its independence from Spain and France, and claimed ownership over the still Spanish-controlled Western Sahara.

Also in 1956, the Moroccan Army of Liberation began to move from Northern Spanish Morocco to parts of Spanish Western Sahara to drive the colonists out. On their way, the army rallied up the tribes native to the area, the Sahrawi tribes, and started a large-scale rebellion, which became known as the Infi War. In 1958, Morocco signed an agreement with Spain that gave them the province of Tarfaya (which used to be part of Western Sahara), thus ending the war. That same year, Spain merged the once separate districts of Saguia el-Hamra (north) and

Rio de Oro (south) to form the Spanish Sahara province.<sup>1</sup>



This was the start of the misunderstanding and confusion that has led to present day tension between Western Sahara and Morocco. Morocco saw the Sahrawis' fighting alongside the Moroccan Army of Liberation as a sign that Western Sahara was loyal to the Moroccan crown. However, the Sahrawis viewed it as a battle against Spanish colonization.

Then, in 1971, a group of young Sahrawi students in Moroccan universities began organizing a movement called *The Embryonic Movement for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro* to chase away the Spanish from the area. Originally they planned to locate their movement in Morocco, but after getting no support from several Arab governments, they relocated to the Spanish-controlled Western Sahara and started an armed rebellion. This group of people became known as the Polisario Front and formally began on May 10, 1973 with the goal of ending Spanish colonization. Their first Secretary General, El-Ouali Mustapha Sayed, led the Polisario's first armed raid. They successfully seized the rifles of a Spanish post manned by a team of Tropas Nomadas, which were composed of Sahrawi tribesmen loyal to Spain. Their loyalty was tested with the Polisario constantly attacking. Eventually, around 1975, the Tropas Nomadas began deserting their post and joining the Polisario Front. At this point, the Polisario front contained about 800 men and women, but Spain and Morocco suspected they had a much

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<sup>1</sup> <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/students/curriculum/m16/activity3.php> (Images)

larger group of supporters. A visiting mission by the UN in June of 1975 was surprised by the large support for independence rather than Spanish rule or joining with Morocco and Mauritania and the consensus among the people that the Polisario Front was “the most powerful political force in the country”.<sup>2</sup>

### *Withdrawal of Spain*

While Spain was negotiating a handover of power, Morocco started pressuring the Spanish through invasions into Western Sahara. As a result, Spain negotiated with Morocco and Mauritania, which led to the signing of the Madrid Accords. Spain withdrew from Western Sahara in the beginning of 1976, Morocco took over Saguia El Hamra, and Mauritania took over Rio de Oro. The Polisario Front, whose goal was the independence of the Western Sahara, was angered by this selfish, independent move made by the Moroccans, Spanish, and Mauritians. So, on February 27, 1976, the Polisario Front proclaimed the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and waged guerrilla war against both Morocco and Mauritania. The Polisario Front helped guard the fleeing Sahrawi refugees, but after the Moroccans air bombed the refugee camps, the front had to relocate refugees to Western Algeria. For the next two years, refugees flocked to Algeria and Libya, which supplied the Polisario Front with arms and funding. With the new arms and funds the army reorganized and was able to inflict severe damage on Morocco and Mauritania.

The weak Mauritanian regime, which had an army of under 3000 men, was unable to fight the guerrilla attacks. Furthermore, people in Northern Mauritania sympathized with Polisario. The war caused a lack in funds and nearly broke the government system. When the leader of Polisario, El Ouali, died in a raid, the Sahrawi morale did not collapse as expected.

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<sup>2</sup> Shelley, Toby (2004). *Endgame in the Western Sahara: What Future for Africa's Last Colony?*. London: Zed Books. pp. 171–172.

Instead, a man named Mohamed Abdelaziz replaced him and continued pushing the attacks. Finally in 1978, the Mauritania regime fell to a coup d'état led by war-weary military officers. A peace treaty was signed on August 5, 1979 in which the new government of Mauritania recognized Sahrawi rights to the Western Sahara region and revoked its own claims. Mauritania then withdrew all its forces and formally recognized the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Morocco was enraged at Mauritania and immediately claimed for itself the portion of Western Sahara evacuated by Mauritania.

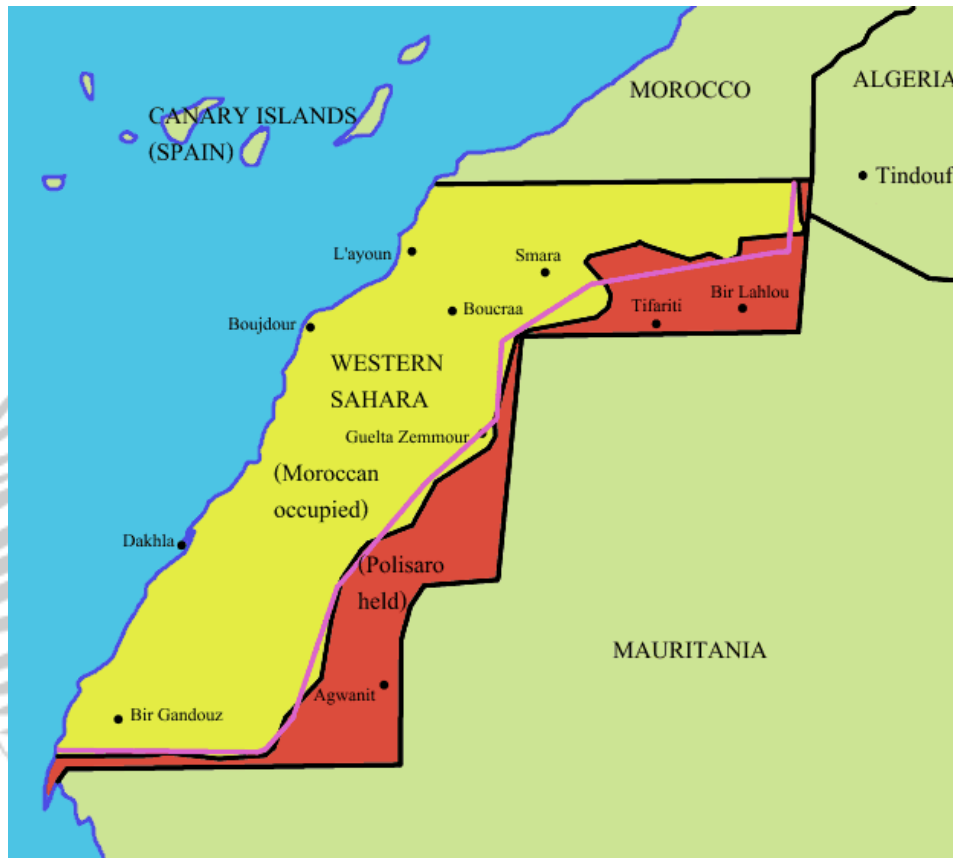
Around the mid-1980s, Morocco was able to keep the Polisario troops off by building a huge sand wall (the Moroccan Wall). The wall was guarded by an army the same size as the Sahrawi population. Furthermore, the wall enclosed within it all the economically useful parts of Western Sahara. This put the war in a stalemate, but the strikes and sniping attacks continued.

Finally, on September 6, 1991, a cease-fire was put into effect and was monitored by MINURSO (the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara). It was put in with the promise of a referendum on independence within a year. Citizens of Western Sahara would vote on who they thought should control the Western Sahara area. However, the referendum was delayed over disagreements on voter rights. Morocco wished to include all people living in the territory and several thousands of people living in southern Morocco, but the Polisario Front insisted that only those found in the 1974 final Spanish census and their descendants should be included.

### *Current Events*

During the cease-fire there were several attempts to restart the process, most notably the Baker Plan of 2003, but they all failed. The first draft of the plan, by UN envoy James Baker in

2000, was never presented to the Security Council. It was written by a Morocco-sponsored legal team, though based on Baker's proposals, and offered the people of Western Sahara autonomy (self-rule) in all aspects other than defense and foreign policy within the Moroccan state. This



meant that Western Sahara would become a part of Morocco and would be able to make decisions only at the level of the local government. Both Algeria, an active opponent of Morocco, and the Polisario Front, rejected this plan. Algeria then suggested that the territory be divided between parties.

The second version, known as Baker II, proposed that the territory rule itself under an assigned Western Sahara authority for five years, followed by a referendum for independence. Morocco voiced its objection early on, and Algeria and the Polisario Front reluctantly accepted the plan as a start for negotiation because they did not want to be under another authority for an

additional five years. In July of 2003, the UN endorsed the plan, but Morocco then rejected it, saying that it would no longer agree to any plan that involved a referendum for independence. After this failure, James Baker resigned in protest. Currently, no replacement plan exists. Meanwhile, the Polisario Front threatened to break the cease-fire if a referendum could not be held.

In April 2007, the government of Morocco suggested that a self-governing body through the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs should govern the territory, but allow some autonomy for Western Sahara. This plan quickly gained French and US support. A day before, the Polisario Front had submitted its own proposal that suggested returning to living in the Western Sahara territory if the referendum was in favor of independence. The stalemate forced the UN Security Council to ask both parties to enter into direct negotiations to reach a mutually accepted political solution. This negotiation process was known as the Manhasset negotiations, but no progress was made. Both parties refused to compromise because they each had their own idea of what the core sovereignty issues were. The main point of disagreement was whether or not to put independence as an option on the voting ballot. Morocco would not sign any plan that allowed independence, and the Polisario Front would not sign any plan without it. Finally, in May 2010, Polisario Front suspended contacts with the MINURSO because it was unable to implement the self-determination referendum and was “turning into a protector shield of a colonial fact, the occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco.”<sup>3</sup> Until this day, despite being technically under the administration of Morocco, the status and sovereignty of Western Sahara

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<sup>3</sup> "El Polisario rompe los contactos con la MINURSO". El País. 28 May 2010. Retrieved 4 June 2010.(Spanish)

(or the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic) remain unresolved; 84 UN member states currently recognize it<sup>45</sup>.

### *Focus Questions*

1. How can we gain more recognition and approval for the independence of the SADR?
2. How do we maintain peace across the border and areas of conflict?
3. How do we protect the human rights of refugees and other civilians affected?

### ***Relations with Other JCC Countries***

#### *Algeria*

The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and Algeria have a good relationship. Originally, Algeria too wanted to claim a portion of the SADR, but its worsening relations with Morocco caused it to shift its position to supporting the Polisario Front just to spite Morocco. Throughout the war, Algeria has been supporting the Polisario Front with financial assistance and weaponry. Algeria was also the 3rd country to recognize the SADR as an independent nation. On March 6, 1976, formal diplomatic relations were established and an SADR embassy was created in the capital of Algeria, Algiers.

#### *Morocco*

Morocco and the SADR are not on very good terms, as Morocco claims ownership over the area. They have been fighting against each other, one to conquer, the other to gain independence.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14115715>

<sup>5</sup> <http://mapsof.net/map/western-sahara-map-showing-morocco-and-polisario> (Image)

Morocco refuses to take back its claim on the Western Sahara, so there are high tensions between the two countries. During the committee, we will seek to ease these tensions and come to a mutually accepted agreement.

### ***Positions***

1. Prime Minister: Abdelkader Taleb Oumar
2. Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries: Abdelhamid Charfi
3. Minister of Communication: Saleh Bouhamza
4. Minister of Economics and Finance: Ali Benhafiz
5. Minister of Public Works & Energy: Mehdi Moukhtar
6. Minister of Foreign Affairs: Souhail Attaoui
7. Minister of Islamic Affairs: Abubakr Benfatteh
8. Minister of Health: Ahmad Dakhlaoui
9. Minister of the Interior: Mazigh Ayyoubi
10. Minister of Justice: Hamza Ourahma
11. Minister of Labor: Abdelkrim Benlafiqh
12. Minister of Education: Fatima Saleha
13. Minister of Women and Family: Khadija Bou-Ali
14. Minister of Culture: Taleb Hassani
15. Polisario Front Representative: Saif Moharbi

*N.B. With the exception of the Prime Minister, the names of these officials are made up. Their positions, however, are real.*



### ***Works Cited***

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