

Erik Hagen

board member of Western Sahara Resource Watch



AGM Siemens AG, Munich, February 1st 2017

[English intro] My name is Erik Hagen, I am a board member of Western Sahara Resource Watch. I am here to express my concern over Siemens FAILURE to seek the consent from the people of occupied Western Sahara to operate on their land. Unfortunately, I do not speak German, so my colleague here will read my statement.]

For four decades, Morocco has kept the territory of Western Sahara under foreign occupation.

No state in the world recognise Morocco's claim to Western Sahara. The UN has condemned Morocco's invasion. The International Court of Justice has declared that Morocco has **no rights** to that land.

HALF the people of the territory has fled after the occupation. More than **ONE HUNDRED** 100 UN resolutions are calling for the right to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

Siemens seems to not bother about the rights of the people of Western Sahara. Siemens' signs agreements for construction of windmills in Western Sahara with **the wrong government** - that of Morocco. Its business partner is owned by the royal family in Morocco.

Our association has on numerous occasions asked Siemens **WHAT** it has done to seek the consent of the people of Western Sahara - when operating on **THEIR** land.

Siemens has never responded to that question. Siemens maintains that it is contributing to the *development of the territory*. But that is **not** responding to the question that **we** are asking - nor the question that the **Saharawi** people ask.

Siemens windmills supply today 95 % of the energy required for the Moroccan government to operate its mining industry in Western Sahara, an industry widely blacklisted by international investors for violating basic ethics. The secretary-general of the local Saharawi association for the protection of natural resources in Western Sahara is serving a **lifetime in a Moroccan jail** for protesting this plunder. Siemens is today morally, financially, politically, supporting the Moroccan occupation. On its website, Siemens even labels Western Sahara as part of Morocco.

The Court of Justice of the EU last year dealt with the question of EU operations in Western Sahara. The judgement from December is crystal clear. Western Sahara is fundamentally distinct and separate from Morocco. **Morocco has no right to enter into deals in Western Sahara without hearing the opinion of the**

representative body of the people of Western Sahara. Based on that judgement, there is no other way to describe agreements with the government of Morocco in Western Sahara as “**ILLEGAL**”.

It is hard to underline this clear enough. Siemens is running a real financial risk b. These agreements with the Moroccan government are null and void. Worthless. ... Signed with the **wrong government**.... We urge all of you here today to study the judgement of the EU Court of Justice. Without seeking consent of the representative body of Western Sahara, a company violates **basic principles of law**.

This is a matter of human rights and basic due diligence. It is not enough of Siemens to SAY that it supports human rights. It has to show this in practice. In Western Sahara, this right means that the people has to decide over their own land.

We have two questions to the management of Siemens:

First, why does Siemens refuse to seek the consent of the people of Western Sahara?

Second, since Siemens refuses to seek the consent of the people of the territory: How does Siemens address the risk of legal sanctions from the representative body of the people of Western Sahara?