

Brussels  
19 February 2014

To the attention of Simon Thomson  
CEO of Cairn Energy

**Regarding: Participation in unethical oil exploration offshore occupied Western Sahara**

Dear Mr. Thomson

Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW) has taken note of Cairn Energy's partnership with Kosmos Energy, requiring the company to carry out 3D seismic surveys and exploratory drilling in the Boujdour Block, of which it now holds a 20% working interest. It is our understanding that these activities, pending approval by the Moroccan government, would commence this year. The partnership was announced on your website 28 October 2013  
<http://www.cairnenergy.com/index.asp?pageid=27&newsid=441>

As you will know, the Boujdour block is located in the area of Western Sahara that is illegally occupied by the Moroccan government, in blatant violation of the principles of the UN Charter and numerous Resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly. All those Resolutions, and the International Court of Justice have accorded the people of Western Sahara, the Saharawi people, the right to self-determination, but the exercise thereof is continuously being blocked by Morocco. The war between the Kingdom of Morocco and Frente Polisario has resulted in a military division of the territory and a ceasefire that is being monitored by the UN.

Meanwhile, Morocco continues to trample the most basic human rights of Saharawi that live under the yoke of its occupation. Approximately 160,000 Saharawi refugees that fled during the war continue to live in inhumane conditions in Algerian refugee camps, located in the most inhospitable part of the Saharan desert.

In direct response to the exploration work carried out by the oil industry in occupied Western Sahara, the UN Security Council's legal counsel has stated that any exploration or exploitation of the natural resources of Western Sahara would be in violation of international law if the people of the territory, the Saharawi people, do not consent to the activity nor stand to benefit there from. See the UN 2002 legal opinion on [www.arso.org/Olaeng.pdf](http://www.arso.org/Olaeng.pdf).

We are convinced that oil exploration activities in Western Sahara in cooperation with the Moroccan state oil company directly contribute to undermine the UN peace process in Western Sahara, and the

[www.wsrw.org](http://www.wsrw.org)

*Western Sahara Resource Watch works to raise awareness of the illegal occupation of Western Sahara and to support the recognition of the Saharawi people's right to self-determination.*

rights of the people of the territory. We do not believe it is in the interest of Cairn to be associated with such business.

The ethical investment community is closely monitoring developments of the oil industry in occupied Western Sahara. Just last year, Norwegian insurance company KLP, for instance, proceeded to blacklist Total as it considered that the company's "activities on the continental shelf off Western Sahara's coast may be linked to breaches of fundamental ethical norms".

On Cairn's webpage, Cairn defines itself as follows: "At Cairn, we believe in doing things the right way.[...] It also means we act with respect – for people and their communities, the environment, the rule of law and human rights. We believe in, and act upon, our responsibility to care for people, the environment and society."

We cannot see how this position would match with carrying out a project on occupied land, in cooperation with a government dedicated to silencing the Saharawi's just call to exercise their right to self-determination; the most fundamental human right of all.

In line with the UN legal opinion, we appeal to Cairn Energy's to reconsider its involvement in occupied Western Sahara. That would truly be "doing things right".

We hope to hear from you that your company is intending to do exactly that. A response can be sent to [coordinator@wsrw.org](mailto:coordinator@wsrw.org).

We look forward to your response.

For your information, this request will be published on our webpages, [www.wsrw.org](http://www.wsrw.org).

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