

De Nederlandse Zoutbank  
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Via: [info@denederlandsezoutbank.nl](mailto:info@denederlandsezoutbank.nl)

Brussels  
27 April 2017

**Re.: De Nederlandse Zoutbank's salt imports from occupied Western Sahara**

Dear Mr Koelewijn,

On 23 April 2017, the cargo vessel BBC Magellan (IMO: 9659528) arrived at the port of Dordrecht, carrying a cargo of salt that was loaded in El Aaiun, occupied Western Sahara. That salt was reportedly destined for your company, De Nederlandse Zoutbank (DNZB). We would be grateful if you could clarify a few questions arising from your import.

As you may know, Western Sahara is a Non-Self-Governing Territory without an administering power. The people of the territory, the Saharawi people, have an internationally acknowledged right to self-determination – as was clarified by the International Court of Justice in 1975, and as has been restated in hundreds of UN Resolutions ever since.

Trading in products from the territory that is partially under Moroccan military control is highly problematic. It provides revenues and a sign of legitimacy to what is effectively an occupation – often times referred to as the last colony in Africa. For these reasons, importers in Norway and Denmark have decided to halt all further salt imports from the territory.

The Supreme Court of the European Union clarified on 21 December 2016 that the EU's trade and association arrangements with Morocco do not lawfully apply to the territory of Western Sahara, which ought to be considered a third state. In order for any EU trade or association agreement to affect the territory of Western Sahara, explicit consent of the people of the territory is required, the Court ruled. (*CJEU, C-104/16 P, Council v Front Polisario*) The Dutch Government has issued a press release summarizing the judgment, which can be found here:

<http://www.minbuza.nl/ecer/nieuws/2017/01/eu-verdragen-met-marokko-niet-van-toepassing-op-westelijke-sahara.html>

The Dutch Government has before warned companies about doing business in Western Sahara: <http://www.rvo.nl/onderwerpen/internationaal-ondernemen/landenoverzicht/marokko/westelijke-sahara>

We would be most grateful if you could provide an answer to the following questions;

1. What contractual arrangement does DNZB have with its partner in occupied Western Sahara?
2. Was the cargo on board of the BBC Magellan DNZB's first salt import from occupied Western Sahara?

3. What measures has DNZB taken to obtain the explicit consent of the people of Western Sahara? Has it approached their internationally recognized political representative, the Front Polisario, to ask for their consent to the purchase of their salt?
4. Another cargo from El Aaiun is making its way to the port of Dordrecht, aboard the Albiz (IMO: 9397652). Is DNZB also the importer of this consignment?

If DNZB has not sought the express consent of the people of Western Sahara, we encourage you to issue a statement clarifying that this particular import should not have happened, and that your company will refrain from any further purchases. We are convinced that it is not in DNZB's interest to be associated to a brutal occupation that comes with a high human and humanitarian cost.

Should you require any further information to fully engage the matter, please do not hesitate to contact us. We'd be happy to answer any questions you may have, or to meet you to discuss the issue.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sara Eyckmans

Coordinator

Western Sahara Resource Watch

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