International Conference

50 Years of Decolonization: The Western Sahara Process

FLUP, sala de reuniões

7th-8th November 2023

Commemorations of African independences have lately been the pretext for the organisation of historical conferences. In the case of Western Sahara, whose decolonisation process is still on-going, it seems harder to find reference dates to use as milestones. Along almost seven decades of conflicts, which one to pick? 1957 and the first modern colonial war in the territory? 1969 and the beginning of the nationalist movements? 1975 and the colonial withdrawal followed by the Moroccan Green March? 1991 and the UN pledge for a referendum? More could be added to a possible celebration list of events.

This Conference chose to center on the "middle" date of 1973 and to cover backwards and forwards the history of this long process. 1973 was a turning point between world economic cycles and the year in which Arab summits decisively entered in the world politics (from the oil price settings to the October oil boycott). In W. Sahara it was a time for a new wave of anticolonial movements, namely the Polisario Front who would remain the main catalyser of Saharawi identity until today.

With this Conference, the Organizing Board hopes to present the results of recent research on the Western Sahara modern history and to update debates about the oldest ongoing political conflict in Africa.

It is also important to stress that a selection of the papers presented at this Conference will be published by the Tifariti University Research Center, whose scientific journal is expected to come out in this symbolic year of the 50th anniversary of the Polisario Front.

Panels:

1. The Sahara at the time of African decolonizations

- The colonial powers, the "great Morocco", the "great Mauritania" and the tradition of Saharawi resistance: from the 1957-1958 war to the MLS (1970).

and the tradition of Saharawi resistance: from the war of 1957-1958 to the MLS (1970)

- Social transformations in the Sahara: the diaspora, the drought of 1968-1973, the phosphates and the colonial political reforms (1961-1974).

- The Saharawi political movements in the 1970s and the formation of the Polisario Front.

- The UN, the OAU and the years 1974-1975

- The Madrid agreements, the Moroccan policy and the "Green March".

2. The First War (1975-1991)

- Military operations in the field

- The diplomatic front: Sahara, Morocco and Mauritania in the Cold War

- Relations between the Makhzen and Israel

3. The years of waiting (1991-2020)

- The failure of the referendum and of the UNO

- The Saharawi question in world politics

4. The Second War (2020-...)

- Military operations on the ground

- The diplomatic front: Sahara and Morocco in world politics

- The mobilization of public opinion: from human rights to social networks and Moroccan soft power

Proposals:

Abstracts of the proposals should be within 300 *Word* characters and sent to **ceaup@letras.up.pt**

Proposals must include the identification of the author (surname, first name, and institutional affiliation) and the title of the proposed communication.

At the Conference, the accepted papers should be delivered within 15 to 20 minutes.

Working Languages:

Arabic; English; Spanish

Calendar

Deadline for submission of proposals: **July 16, 2023**

Response to calls: **July 21, 2023**

Held of the Conference: **7th-8th November 2023**

The drafting protocol will be communicated to the contributors whose proposals are accepted.

Scientific Committee - (already confirmed)

Bahia MH Awah (Autónoma de Madrid)

Emboriki Ahmadi (Adviser - Ministery of Foreign Affairs of the SADR)

Hassan O, Kaya (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Juan Carlos Gimeno (Autónoma de Madrid)

Jatari Andal-la (UniversidadTifariti)

Luz Marina Mateo (Universidad de La plata)

Maciel Santos (CEAUP)

Melanini Lakhal (SADRS - Ambassador)

Mourad Aty (CEAUP)

Organization Committee

Carla Delgado (CEAUP)

Jorge Teixeira (CEAUP)

Isabel Lourenço (CEAUP)

Bachir Zergan (UniversidadTifariti)

Lhassen Salke (Universidad Tifariti)