

WORKING AND ADMINISTRATION

A UNIQUE PHENOMENON

CAMPS AS A STATE

POLISARIO/SADR AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

POLISARIO

MILESTONES OF POLISARIO

SADR

ORGANISATION OF FRENTE POLISARIO AND SADR

ELPS

RABOUNI

GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

PUBLIC FACILITIES

ADMINISTRATION

MAYOR OF EL AAIÚN

COMPARISON RABOUNI & HADJER HADID

HADJER HADID

COMPARISON

WORKING

DEVELOPMENT

INTERVIEWS

GOAT BARNES

COMPARISON CAMPS

CONCLUSION

Working and administration

Diana Zenklusen



DRAFT

© ETH Studio Basel



WORKING AND ADMINISTRATION

ةدحو ةي طارق مي دة يرح
(Liberty, democracy, unity)

Motto of POLISARIO; the Sahraoui national liberation movement working for the independence of Western Sahara from Morocco.





DRAFT
© ETH Studio Basel

Daira centre El Aaiún

A UNIQUE PHENOMENON

More than 35 years passed and the Sahraouis are still living in refugee camps. They still don't have any perspective to return to their homeland.

In the late 1975 the refugees started to arrive in Tindouf area. It was already populated by ethnic Sahraoui's.¹ Tindouf was a natural place for the Sahraouis to establish themselves. Because of logistical and ethnic reasons the refugees were used to the Hammadah. Hammadah, a dry flat rocky plane desert in the northwest Sahara is between Morocco, Algeria and Western Sahara. It made life hard.

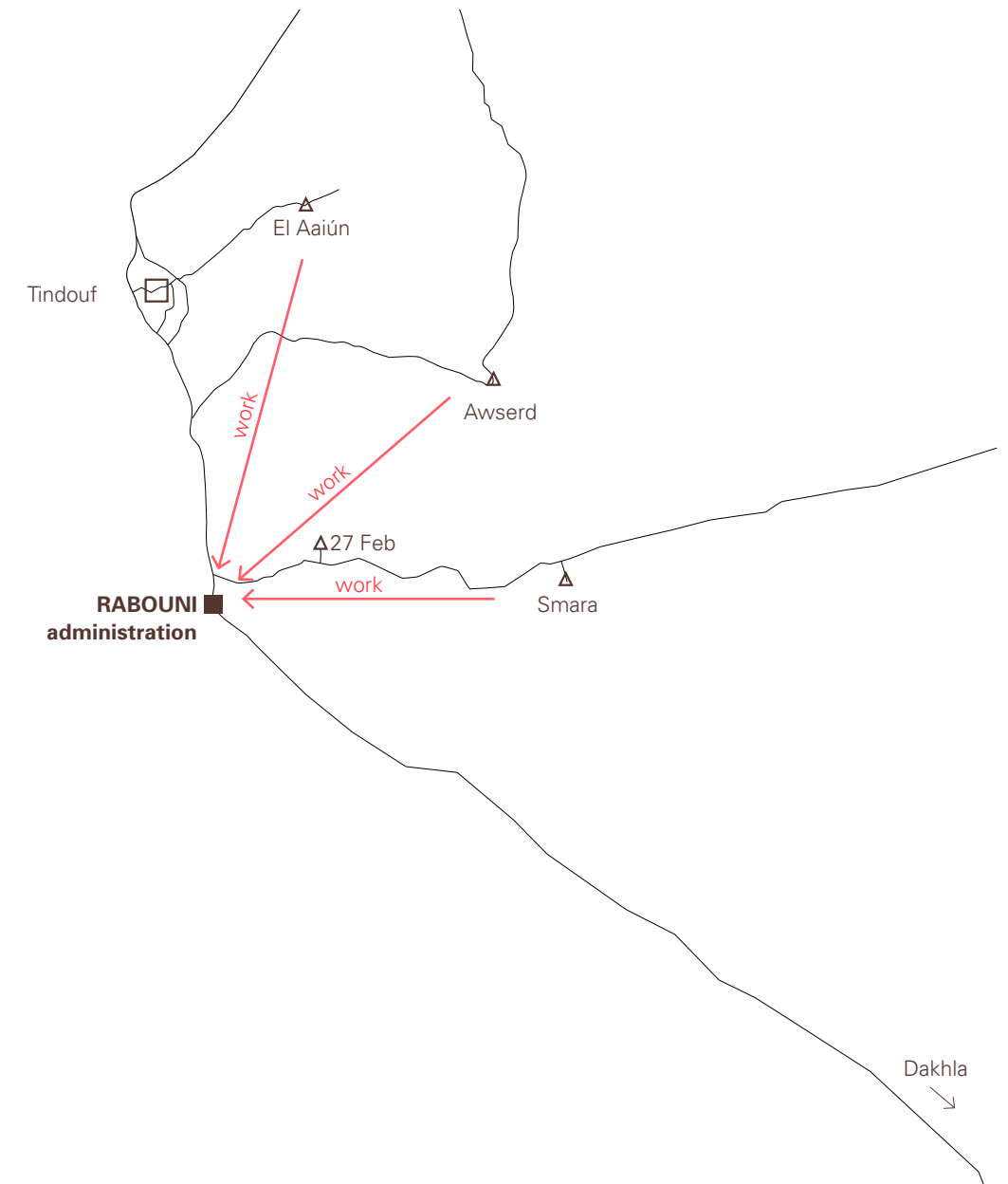
Over years, they built their settlements on sandy land close to cities.

The isolation created a strong sense of union and community. Everyone was seen as a part of a big family. This created a democratic state.

The Sahraoui camps are a unique appearance in the world of refugee. They succeeded to build a self-managed state in exile. Also geographically the Sahraoui camps differ from other refugee camps. They have a single settlement for administration, only - Rabouni.

Rabouni is the head quarter of the government-in-exile, the Sahraoui Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and is its administrative centre.

Nevertheless self-sufficiency in such an inhospitable environment is hopeless. They are still heavily dependent on outside aid.



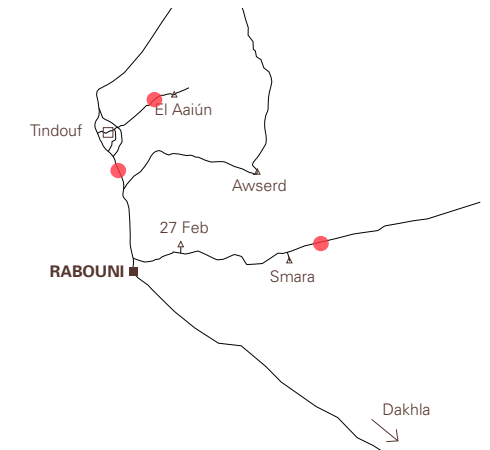
Working and administration

Rabouni is the administration and military centre of Polisario, the Sahraoui rebel national liberation movement. It plays a remarkable role in history of refugee camps.

No one lives in this administration camp any more. Every day commuters travel from the closer camps to Rabouni for work.

Only a minority (3%)² of the population have formal work as a primary source of income.





CAMPS AS A STATE

Polisario is the administrative authority of the Sahraoui's. It's the only political party, which proclaimed the Sahraoui Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in 1976.

Since the refugee movement to Algeria, SADR built a state in exile. The camps are self-managed by SADR/Polisario and they follow political projects. They build a unique governmental system in exile.

In comparison to other refugee camps, the Sahraoui camps are better organized and self-reliant. They succeeded in organizing themselves according to their own way of life. There are many reasons for this success.

The host state Algeria assures Polisario a considerable independence in the refugee camps in the area of Tindouf. Tindouf is the main town of Algeria's Province Tindouf. It houses the Algerian military bases.

The Sahraouis can act free in their camps. There are some checkpoints around the camps, which mark the Algerian/Sahraoui-camp borders.

This unique power can be found in ethnic roots of the Sahraoui's. The Sahraoui's are physically and culturally a mix between Arab invaders and nomadic Berber tribes, called "Moors". They are well known for an independent character of socio-political units, expressed in their governmental system. Moors seem to have adapted to the extremely harsh conditions in the desert.

The Sahraouis are though politically independent of outside control, still depending on food and clothing from other countries, Multi-Governmental organizations and NGO's.



photo: by Manuel Herz

Checkpoints ●

Algeria assures Polisario a considerable independence in the refugee camps around Tindouf.

It's a sign for Sahraoui's autonomy, as a state in exile.

POLISARIO/ SADR and international community¹

As a consequence of Polisario's authority in the camps, Multi- Governmental organizations, NGOs and friendly states don't play a direct role in the camp's management. They help to develop strategies in Polisario's administration centre, Rabouni in corporation with SADR and the Sahraoui Red Crescent.

Polisario/SADR chooses the NGOs and supervises every step of the organisation.

International governmental organisations

eg. ECHO/ UN (UNHCR, MINURSO, WFP)
They visit the camps frequently for reports and survey of the current situations. They further keep funding infrastructure and different projects.

NGOs

Nationally and internationally NGOs, solidarity groups and researchers provide material goods and supplies, as well as personnel (doctors, teachers, nurses and surgeons).

Host state Algeria

There are many historical and ideological reasons for Algeria's influence into the conflict. On one hand Algeria

¹ Chatty, Dawn/ Fiddian- Qasmiyeh, Elena/ Crivello Gian(2010)

and Morocco have a power struggle and closed borders. On the other hand it provides a secure control over Western Sahara and a control of Morocco's pursue of territory.

Algeria supports or used to support the Sahraoui's in a number of ways;

- They provided training to the Sahraoui People's Liberation Army (ELPS) in 1970s/1980s. (which has stopped since the ceasefire)
- Algeria supplies financial assistance to the SADR to run the refugee camps. (Food, water, Educational framework, scholarships, medical services...)

The host state permits Sahraoui's an employment for three years. Therefore refugees have no more rights than any other foreigner in Algeria.

Nevertheless Polisario denies the Sahraoui's to work abroad. SADR allows its people to travel to Mauritania, Spain or anywhere else, but some family member has to stay in the camps to make sure people return.

Friendly States

Friendly states as Algeria, Mauritania or Cuba offer scholarships. They also have solidarity with causes and notions in Pan- Arabism or Socialism.

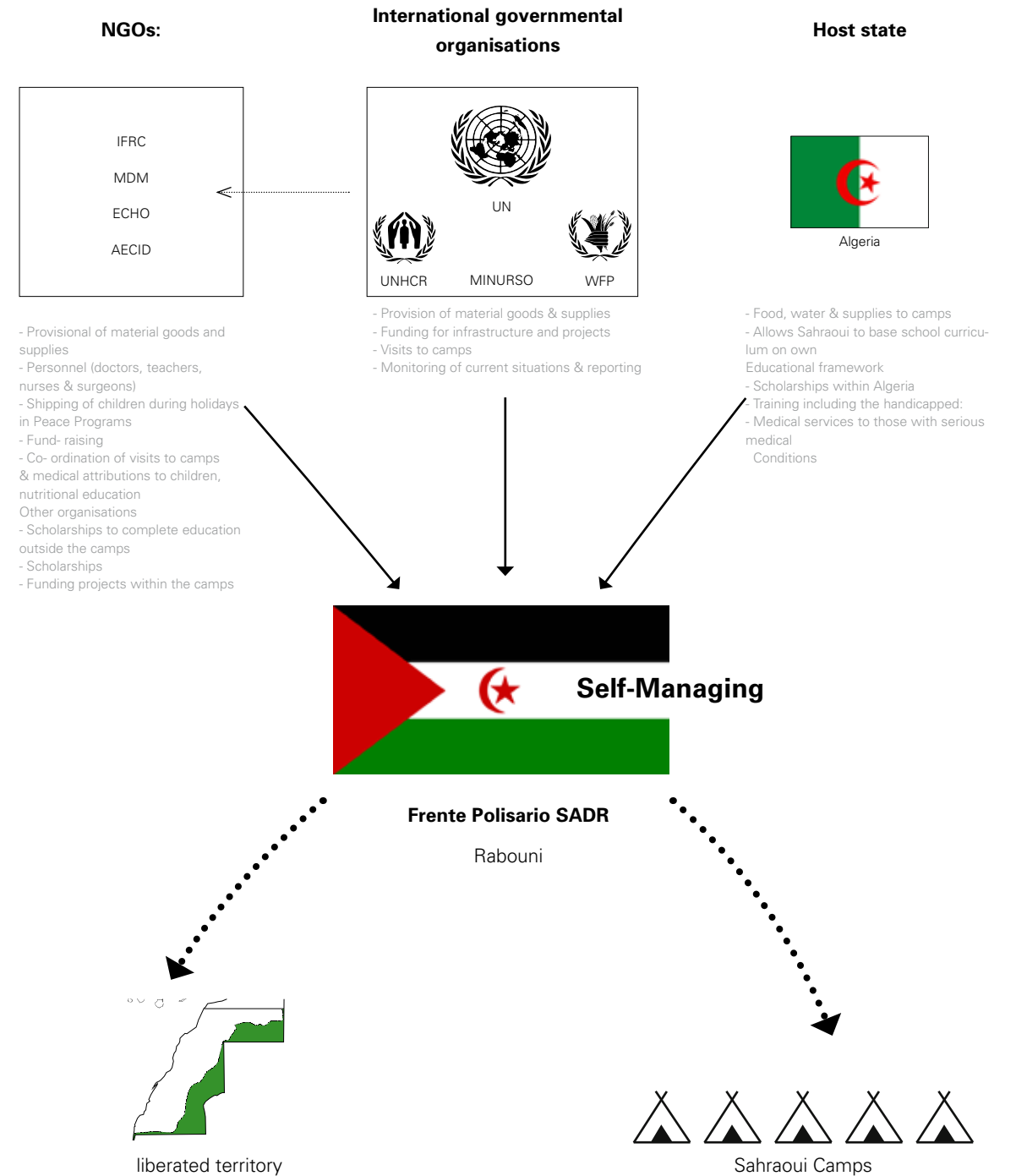




photo: by Manuel Herz



The flag was created by POLISARIO and adopted to SADR on 27 February 1976. It contains colours used in the Arab Revolt (Pan- Arab colours). Black represents death, green represents life and white represents peace. The red star and crescent are major symbols of Islam. 1991 it was slightly modified.²

FRENTE POLISARIO

NAME	POLISARIO Frente popular para la liberacion de Saguia el hamra y rio de orograph
FOUNDATION	1973
STATUS	(only) Political Party
1973	Political and military organisation - first liberation from colonial Spain later fight against the invasion of the Moroccans and Mauritians.
1991	POLISARIO inaugurated a new, more democratic constitution for the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) Accepted a United Nations (UN) peace plan for Western Sahara that provided for a referendum of self-determination
TODAY	Organisation of military, Constitution of the whole parliament
HEADQUARTER	Rabouni

¹ Bhatia, Michael (2001)

Key idea

For most Sahraouis, Polisario is a simple idea. It's a coalition of Sahraoui nationalist political tendencies, spanning Western notions of a Left-Right, progressive conservative spectrum.

SADR/ Polisario intends to transfer their administrative structure from the camps to the territory.¹

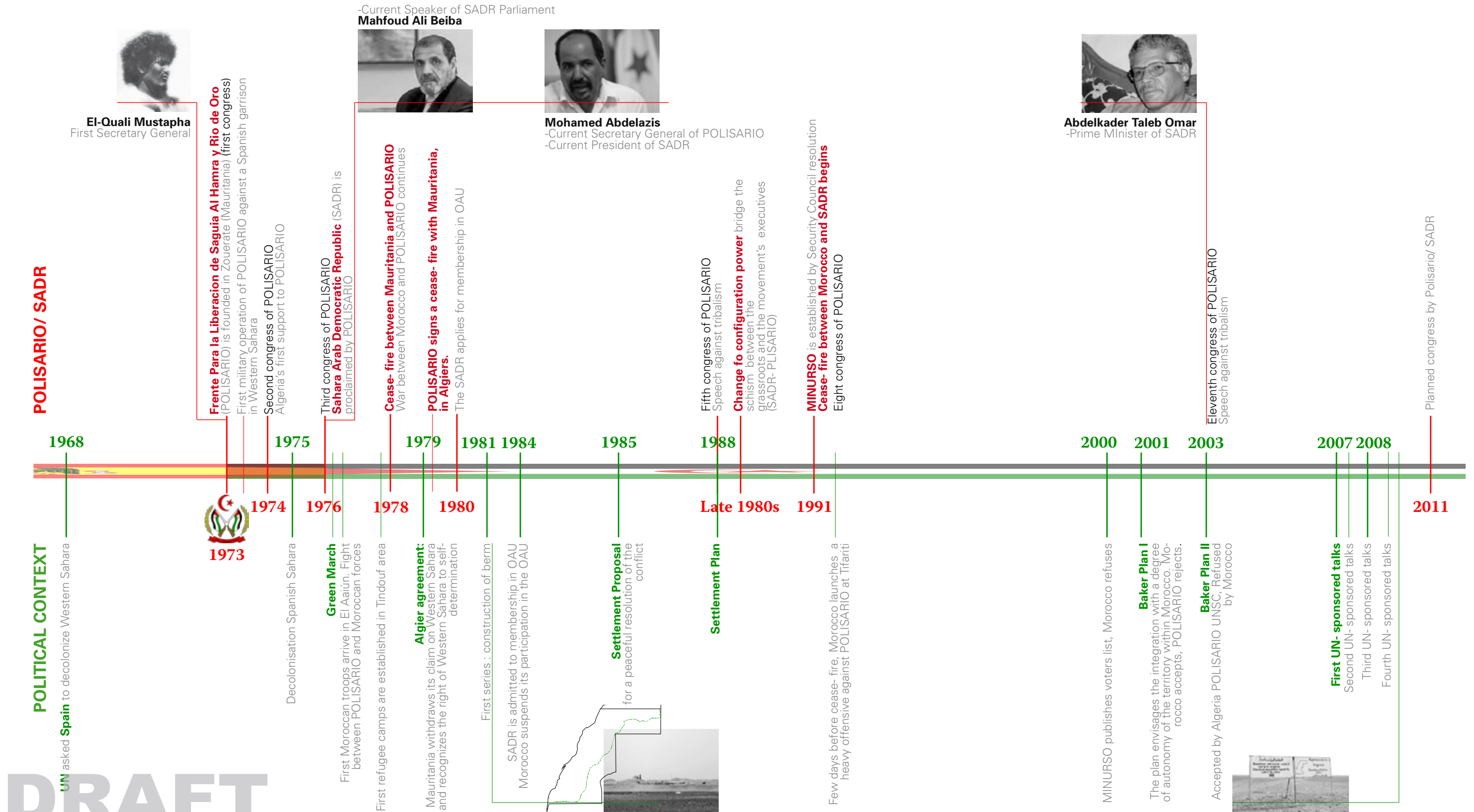
Organisation of camps

Polisario organises the camps internally, developing political, educational, health and social structures and services to attend to the needs of its "refugee-citizens." Polisario officially emphasizes that refugees are in Algeria for security and humanitarian reasons only. Polisario's regional administration and military centre is in Rabouni.

White paper¹

Polisario developed the "White Paper". It demonstrates the structure, the function and the principles of the government.

Milestones of Frente Polisario

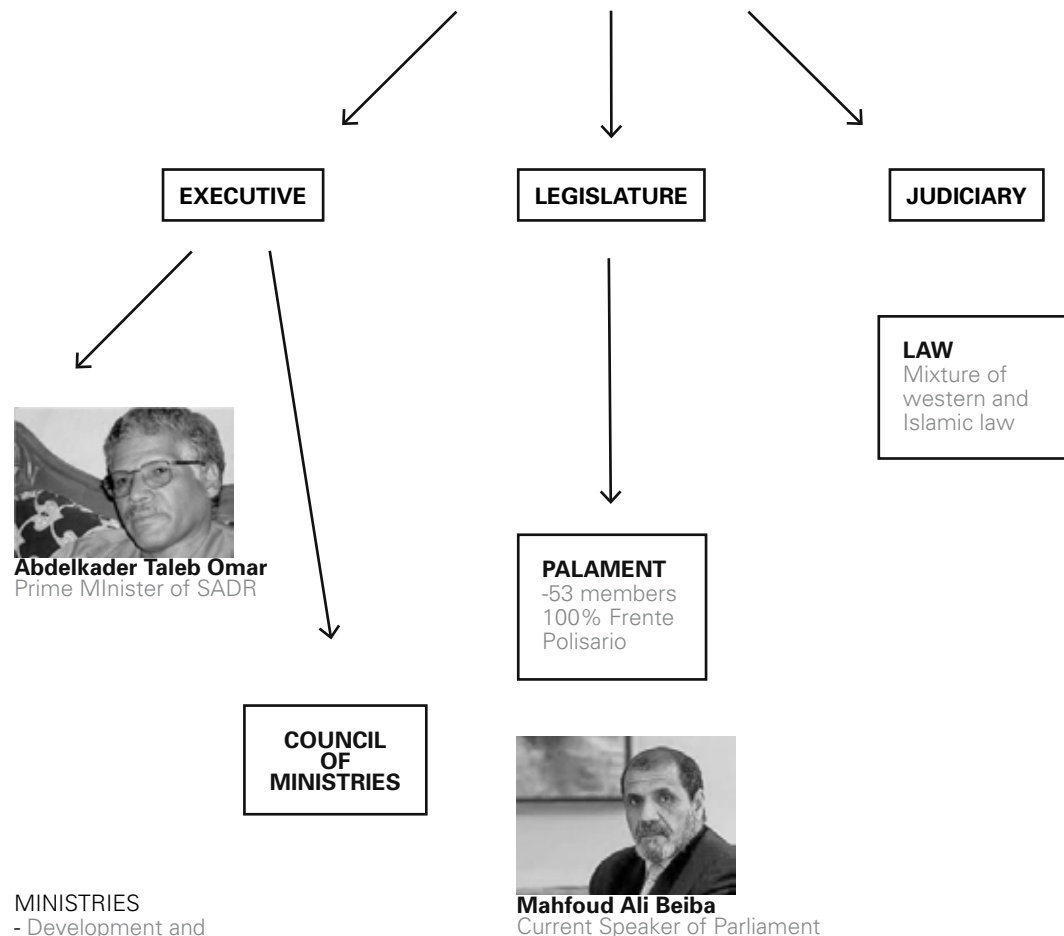




SADR
Heat office



Mohamed Abdelaziz
Current President



Abdelkader Taleb Omar
Prime Minister of SADR



Mahfoud Ali Beiba
Current Speaker of Parliament

- MINISTRIES**
- Development and Employment
 - Economic Development, Equipment
 - Commerce, Cooperation
 - Environment, Transportation
 - Rehabilitation of the Liberated Zones
 - Interior
 - Justice and Religious Affairs
 - Health, Culture, Education
 - Youth and Sport
 - Defense
 - Information
 - Foreign Relations



The national emblem of SADR was designed by POLISARIO.

The symbol presents two crossed rifles with the SADR flag hanging from either gun. In the centre on the top is a red crescent and a star as a symbol of the Islam. Two olive branches surround the guns, flags and the Islamic symbol. At the bottom is written the Polisario motto "Liberty, democracy, unity".

Until June 1991 when it was modified, it also contained a hammer between the rifles.²

SADR

NAME	SADR Saharan Arabic Democratic Republic
FOUNDATION	27 February 1976
STATUS	Government in exile
PRESIDENT	Mohamed Abdelaziz
PRIME MINISTER	Abdelkader Taleb Oumar
DISTRIBUTED	Refugee Camps, Algeria Liberated territory
HEADQUARTER	Refugee Camps Algeria

"The Sahraoui republic sees itself as an Independent state under illegal occupation, not as a government in exile.

Polisario officials emphasize that the refugees are in Algeria for security and humanitarian reasons only.¹

Development

Polisario proclaimed on the 27 February 1976 the Saharan Arabic Democratic Republic. SADR got recognition from over 80 countries. Since 1984 it is also member of the African Union.

Organisation

SADR has a pyramidal organisational structure with the President, now Mohammed Abdelaziz, at his head. The President appoints the Prime Minister of SADR. (now Abdelkader Taleb Oumar). The SADR constitution consists a Judicial branch which defines a law in a mixture of western and Islamic law, the Legislature with the Parliamentary of the Sahraoui National Council (SNC) and the Executive with the Council of Ministries and the President.

Since 1980s SADR took steps towards a division of powers in the republic's structure, a division of Polisario party.

Key points

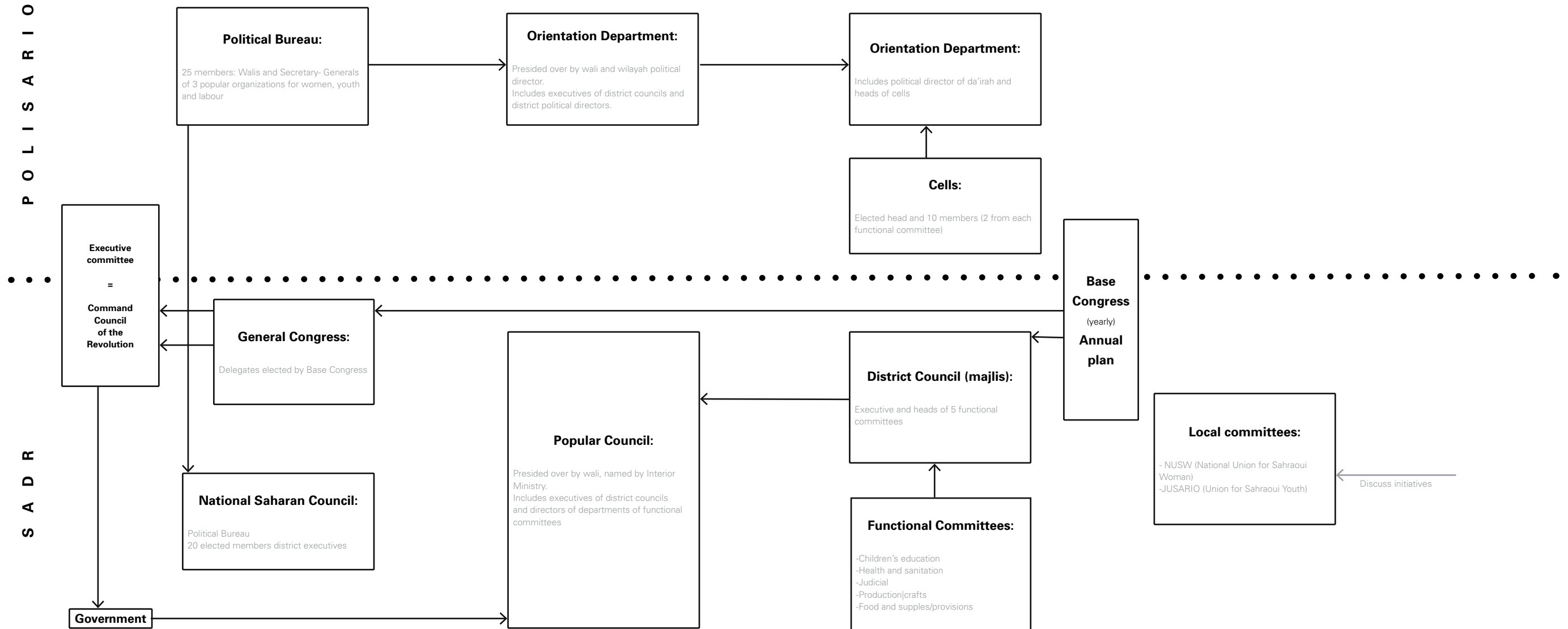
The goals of SADR for an eventual Western Saharan state in the constitution are:

- Multi-party democracy with a market economy
- Arabic language as the sole official language
- Provision for human rights
- Greater Maghreb

¹Zunes, Stephen/ Mundy, Jacob (Ed.) (2010) p.123

² <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/eh.html> / , download: 20 May 2011

Organisation of Frente Polisario and SADR¹



NATIONAL LEVEL WILAYAH LEVEL DA'IRAH LEVEL BARRIO LEVEL KHALIYAH LEVEL

Camps and liberated territories

Provincial level
each Wilayah:
6 primary schools
1 hospital

← 6-7 Da'irahs

District level
each Da'irah:
1 medical clinic/dispensary
1 council (majlis)

← 4 Barrios

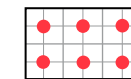
Neighbourhood level
each Barrio:
± 200 tents
Grass roots level of decision making and Management

← Cells

12- 15 person cell



each refugee is officially member of a local cell:
- Organizes the sub-neighbourhoods for specific activities (e. g. cleanups)
- Deal with emergencies (flood 2006)
- Discusses political or social initiatives for hayy or functional committee





Museo Nacional de la Resistencia, Rabouni



Museo Nacional de la Resistencia, Rabouni



militaryphotos.net (2011-05-16)

Women and Polisario

Women from the Pro-independence Polisario Front rebel soldiers are seen during a military parade in the Western Sahara village of Tifariti, Tuesday May 19, 2008 to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Polisario Army. During war women got training for camp defence.



polisario.forumactif.us (2011-05-16)

The Polisario has no navy or air force, but they have been thinking about it...

ELPS

NAME	ELPS Saharan Popular Liberation Army
FOUNDATION	27 February 1976
HEADQUARTER	Rabouni
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF	Secretary General of Polisario Mohamed Abdelaziz

Polisario's Military

The army of Polisario (ELPS) is integrated into the SADR system through the institution of the Ministry of Defence. The precise size of the Polisario forces is unknown by outsiders. It is generally estimated having between 3'000- 6'000 soldiers.¹ Both male and female refugees in the Tindouf camps undergo military training at age 18. During the war women formed auxiliary units protecting the camps.

ELPS Regions

The ELPS area is divided into six military regions. Each region has five to six battalions, each of which is comprised of approximately four to five military units plus a support specialized unit (signals and communication, tactical analysis, medical, water location and drilling, and vehicle and weaponry repair.)

¹ Bhatia, Michael (2001)

Tactics/ Equipment

With the knowledge of Sahraoui naturally mastery of terrain ELPS developed a rapid hit and run style tactics. In ghazzi tactics they used numerous remodelled civilian vehicles, Land Rovers, mounting anti-aircraft machine guns and tried to overwhelm garrisoned outposts in rapid surprise strikes.

At the beginning in the anti- Spanish rebellion Polisario moved only on foot or camel- back. After the construction of the Moroccan Wall they changed into tactics more focused on artillery, snipers and other long-rang attacks. Item EPLA units have the knowledge of the terrain, speed and surprise. Like the SADR administration they are well organized.

The modern EPLA is now equipped with Soviet- manufactured weaponry, donated mainly by Algeria. Algeria and Libya supported the ELPS in delivering material till 1991. Further the Polisario army got Algerian army training.



Tindouf
35km
El Aaiún
39km
Awserd

27 Feb
11km
RABOUNI
31km
Smara

153km

△
Dakhla
Rabouni WFP

DRAFT
© ETH Studio Basei



RABOUNI

Rabouni- a large agglomeration of buildings and containers.

It is a logistic centre: 4x4 and pick-up station per tens, close to petrol stations.

Decoration of not identified machines and spare parts of all kinds lie on the ground per hundreds.

Oil trails mark streets and parking.

Rabouni was the first camp of the Sahraouis. It was founded in 1976. The main reason to occupy this area was the existence of water. Algeria already had some wells set.

During the first years Rabouni was a camp of settlement divided in 3 Dairas plus administration.

Over years people moved out and founded new camps; Smara, El Aaiún, Awserd, Dakhla and 27 Feb.

By 1986/87 Rabouni was transformed from a place of settlement into a place of administration.

The Sahraouis lived mainly in tents. In leaving Rabouni many gaps were arisen. Today's outline of Rabouni is very loose. Organisations and Ministries occupy wide areas and shape Rabouni's map.

Rabouni is the “capital administrative” of the government Sahraoui.

It's unique for refugee camps to have an own place of administration.

Rabouni is the headquarter of SADR. All the Ministries are based there. Likewise international aid as Multi- governmental organisations or NGO's have their offices in Rabouni.

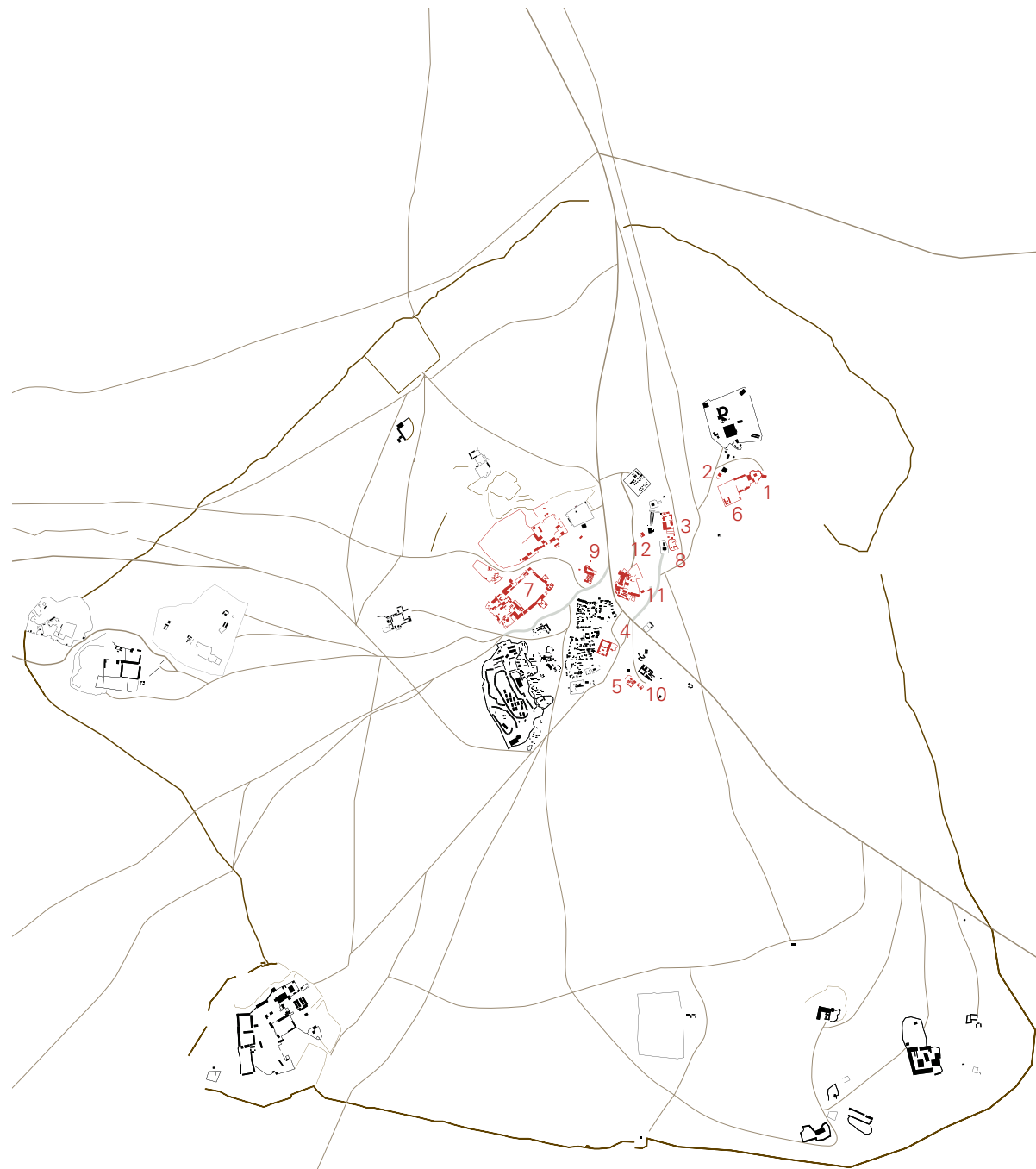
Impressions of Rabouni

Walking through Rabouni is very different to the camps we visited.

In the camps you find kids playing on the sand, mothers and grand-mothers drinking sweet Chinese green-tea all day long. Goats walking free around tents...

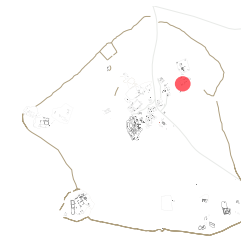
In Rabouni commuters come to work every day by bus, taxi or in a friend's car in the early morning, hurry to work, have a quick lunch in their cantina or in a take-away shop, continue to work and leave in the evening back to the camps...

Rabouni is a pure administration (working) centre.



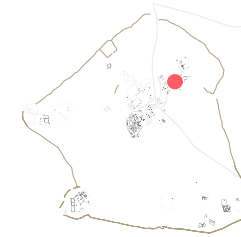
- 1 SADR Management/ Protocolo
- 2 Ministry of Development & Construction
- 3 Ministry of Health
- 4 Ministry of Justice & Religious Affairs
- 5 Ministry of Public Culture
- 6 Ministry of Youth & Sport
- 7 Ministry of Defence
- 8 Ministry of Information
- 9 Ministry of International Affairs
- 10 Ministry of Education
- 11 Parliament
- 12 Archive

DRAFT
 Government facilities
 © ETH Studio Basel

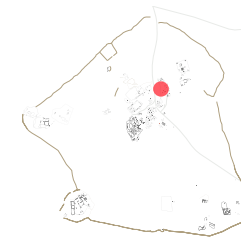


SADR Management/ Protocolo

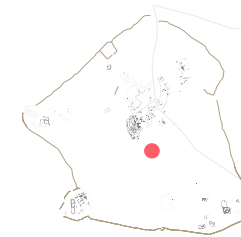
The Protocolo contains government offices and logistical facilities for the camps.



Ministry of Development and Construction

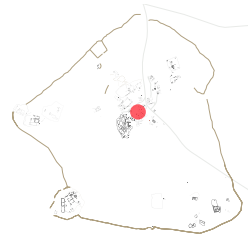


Ministry of Health

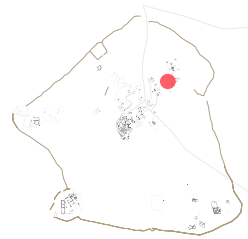


Ministry of Justice and Religious Affairs

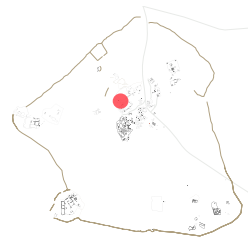




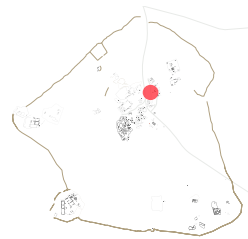
Ministry of Public Culture



Ministry of Youth and Sport

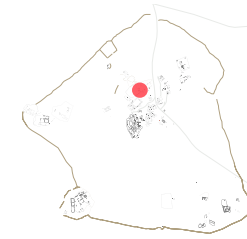


Ministry of Defence

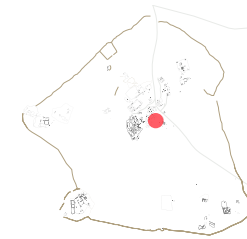


Ministry of Information

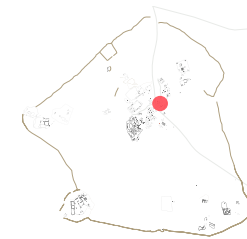
It runs a TV station, several radio stations in the camps and maintains a Web site that publishes information on the conflict..



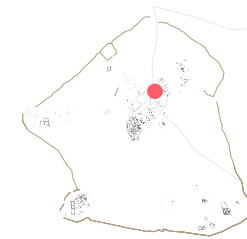
Ministry of International Affairs



Ministry of Education



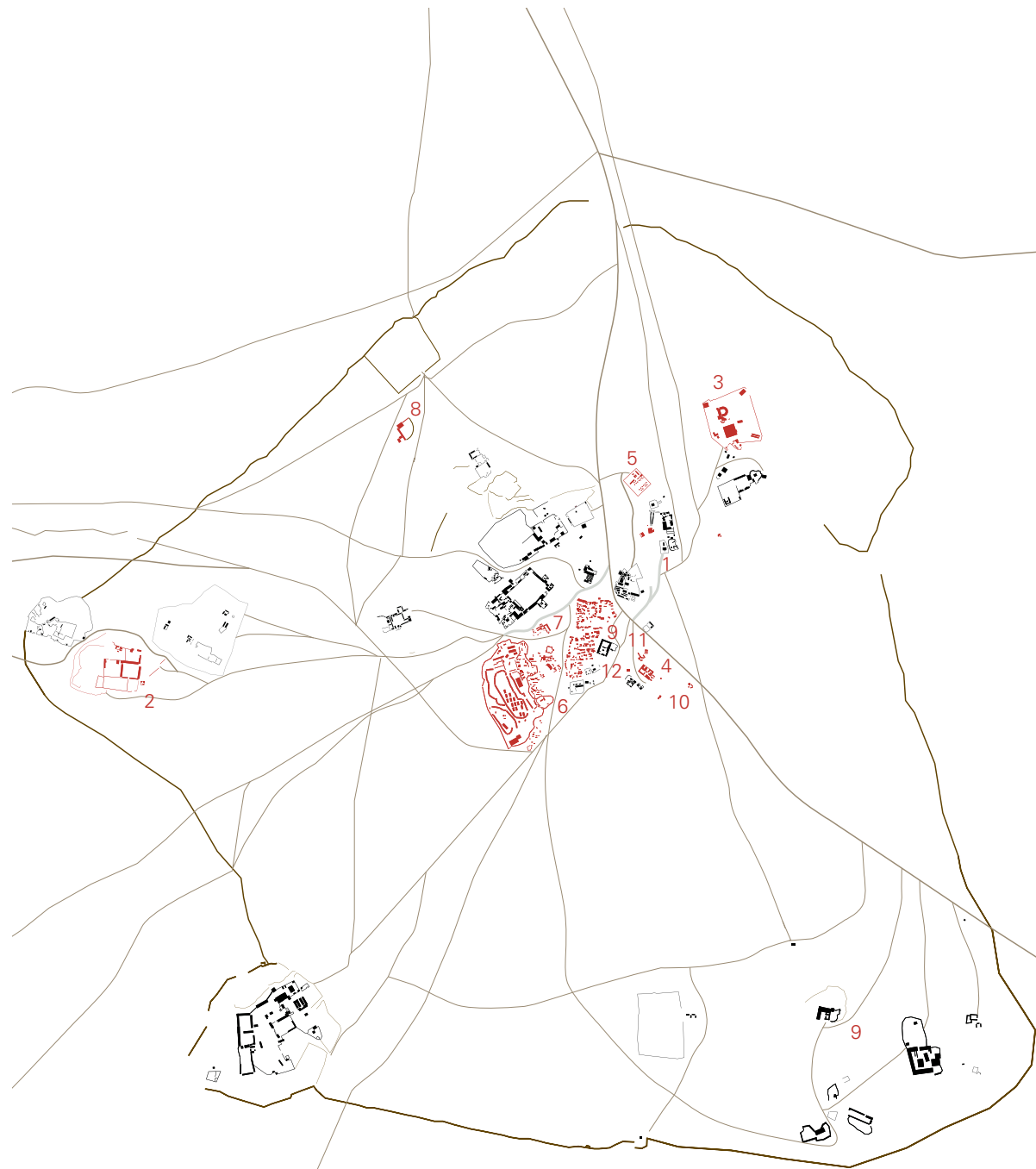
Parliament



Archive- Archivo de Informacion

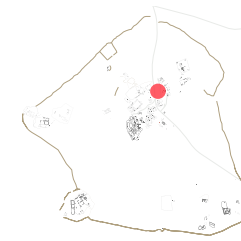
The Archive holds documents, photos, recordings, and videos. A bunch of people store and digitize all the material.





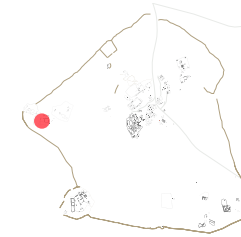
- 1 TV/ Radio RASD
- 2 Museo Nacional de la Resistencia
- 3 Hospital
- 4 UJSARIO
- 5 UNHCR
- 6 MLRS/WFP
- 7 ACNUR
- 8 AECID
- 9 Market
- 10 Accommodation
- 11 Garages
- 12 Mosque

DRAFT
Public facilities
© ETH Studio Basel



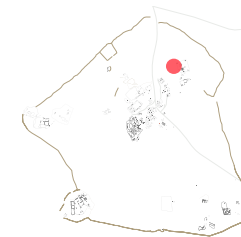
TV/ Radio RASD

The Radio RASD and TV belong to the Ministry of Information. Radio RASD was found on the 28th of December 1975, the TV in 1999.



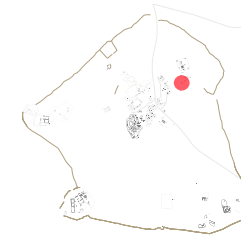
Museo Nacional de la Resistencia

The museum was opened in 1976. It should combat the efforts of Hassan II to try to erase the existence of the Saharawi people.



Hospital

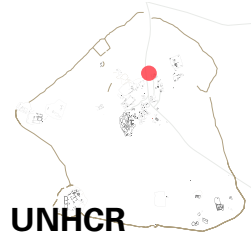
Each camp has a regional hospital and one clinic per Daira. The national Hospital is in Rabouni.



UJSARIO

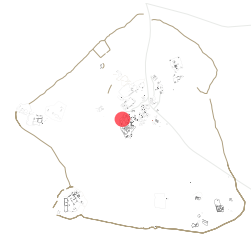
Youth Organisation. Unión de la Juventud de Saguia el Hamra y Rio de Oro. A public organisation, which plays a role in elections of the parliament.





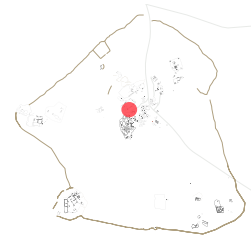
UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
UNHCR is limited in carry out activities in the camps. For UNHCR the Sahraouis are still in the category "ongoing crisis". Consequently the quantity of food aid is minimal.



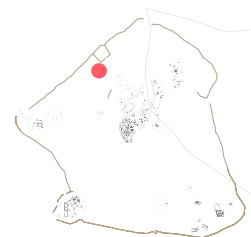
MLRS WFP

Media Luna Roja Sahraoui
World Food Programme



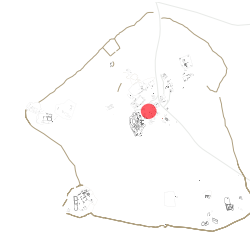
ACNUR

Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados



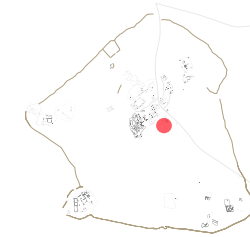
AECID

Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo



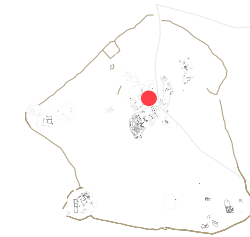
Market

In Rabouni shops look similar to the ones in the camps. In between shops there are many restaurants. We actually found an old caravan serving for a take-away shop...



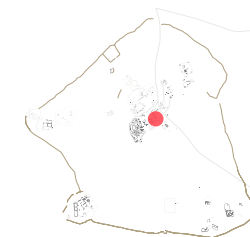
Accommodations

By 1986/87 Rabouni was transformed from a place of settlement into a place of administration. Today there are a few accommodations for weekly residents.



Garages

The percentage of garages in Rabouni is much higher than in the camps. There are many petrol stations and even an Taxi stand or Bus stops.



Mosque

Since a few years, Rabouni has an Mosque. The Sahraouis enjoy much more freedom than would normally be accorded in a strictly Moslem society.







COMPARISON HADJER HADID & RABOUNI

The autonomy of the Western Sahara refugees is a unique appearance among the other refugee camps. They managed to build a nation in exile under a strong leadership and rigid discipline. Multi- governmental organisations and NGO's have a secondary role in the management of the camps. They have to help and act through the Sahraoui government SADR. Also geographically the Sahraoui camps differentiate from other refugee camps. The administration centre Rabouni is managed and dominated by SADR/Polisario only. It's a pure work- settlement. No one lives there any more...

For a comparison we have a look at Hadjer Hadid, the administration settlement of Sudanese refugees. Hadjer Hadid is a village in the Ouaddaï region of Chad. Since the Darfur conflict, Sudanese refugees fled across the boarder and built two refugee camps close to Hadjer Hadid; Breijing in the south-west, Treguine in the north-east.

Geographically the refugees are separated from their management. They live "absorbed" in pure refugee camps under the control of Chad's national refugee authority (CNAR).

Hadjer Hadid as the administration city of Breijing and Treguine has a mixed population. The Chadian population lives in the north. In the South all the Multi- governmental organisations and NGO's are set. In comparison tho the Sahraoui refugee camps, the organisations in Chad have a direct access to the refugee camps.

The Sudanese refugees live under a third party management. They have no political influence in the administration of their camps. Though they are not employed by NGO's or CNAR on contrary the Chadian population are.



Hadjer Hadid (photo: by Manuel Herz)

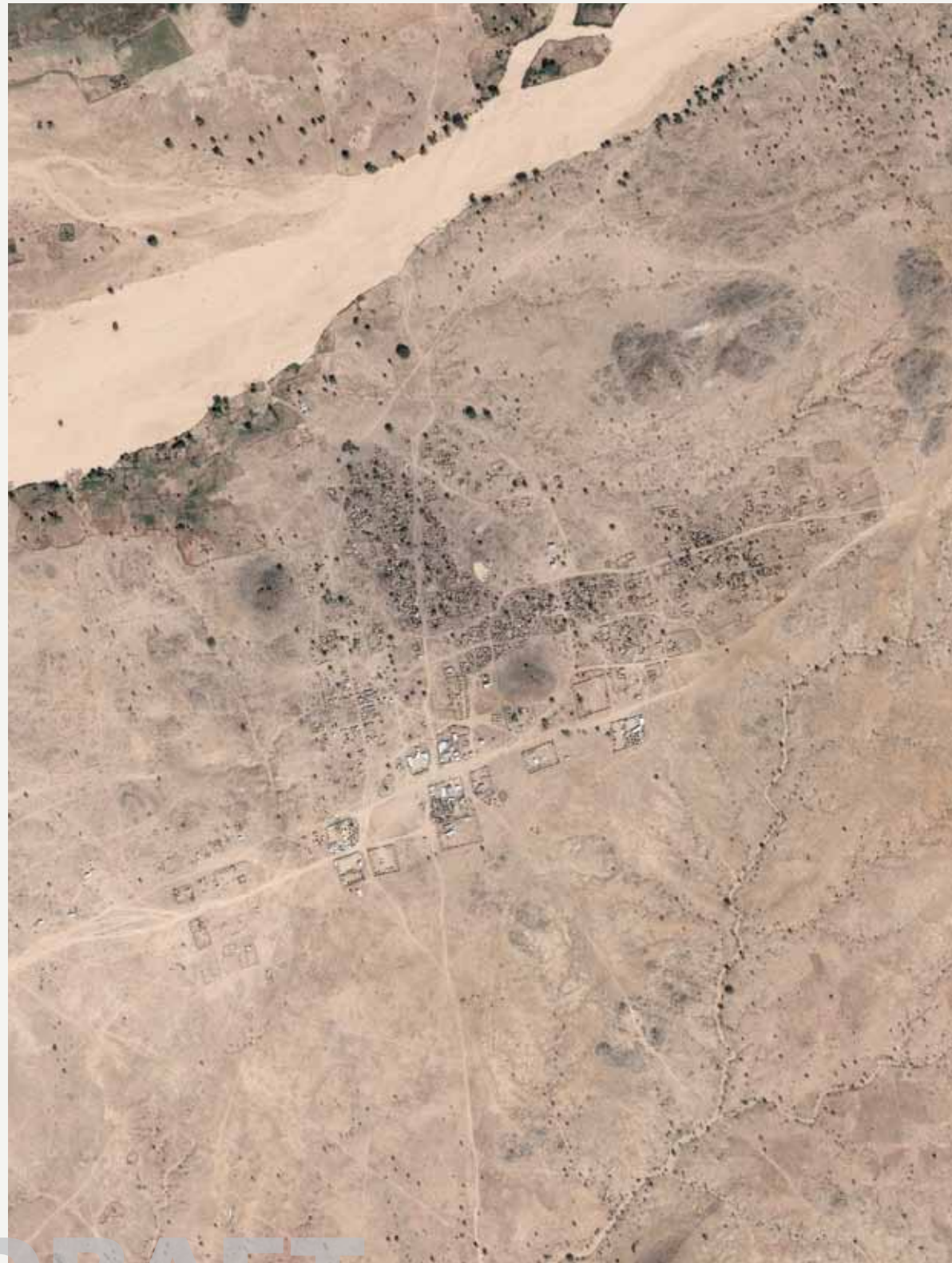
Hadjer Hadid- conflict

Since 2003, thousand of Sudanese refugees have fled to eastern Chad from the conflict in Darfur.

Hadjer Hadid is a small village with two large Sudanese refugees camps nearby, Bredjing and Treguine.

Hadjer Hadid is home to organisations, international and national NGOs.

Hadjer Hadid's desert is an extremely dry area, which transforms into a green paradise during the rainy season.



Multi- governmental orgnitions and NGO's in Hadjer Hadid

CNAR: Chad's national refugee authority

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

MINUCAT: Unitet Nations Mission in Chad & Central African Republic

DIS: Détachement Intégré de Sécurité

NGO, Red Cross Presence Nov 2009²:

(FISCR)/CRT

CORD: Chinmaya Organisation For Rural Development

¹ ochaonline.un.org/OchaLinkClick.aspx?link=ocha&Docid=1211291, download: 06 May 2011

² ochaonline.un.org/OchaLinkClick.aspx?link=ocha&docld=1162938, download: 06 May 2011

EMEET

I F R C: Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et Du Croissant-Rouge

IRC: International rescue committee

HIAS: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

PU: Première Urgence

RET: Refugee Education Trust

SIL: Summer Institute of Linguistics

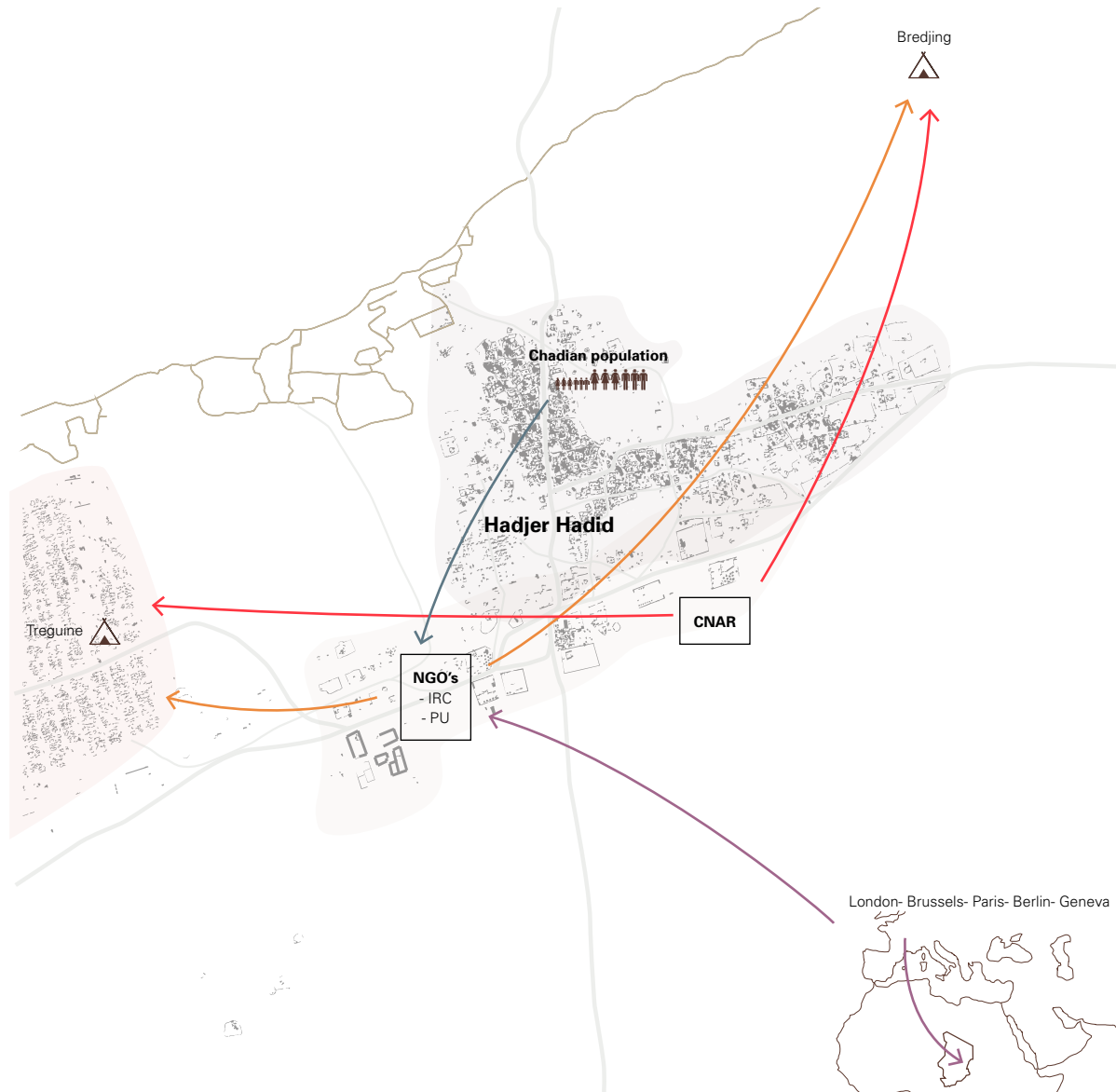
NGO,Red Cross Presence April 2011¹:

IRC: International rescue committee

PU: Première Urgence

RET: Refugee Education Trust

SIL: Summer Institute of Linguistics

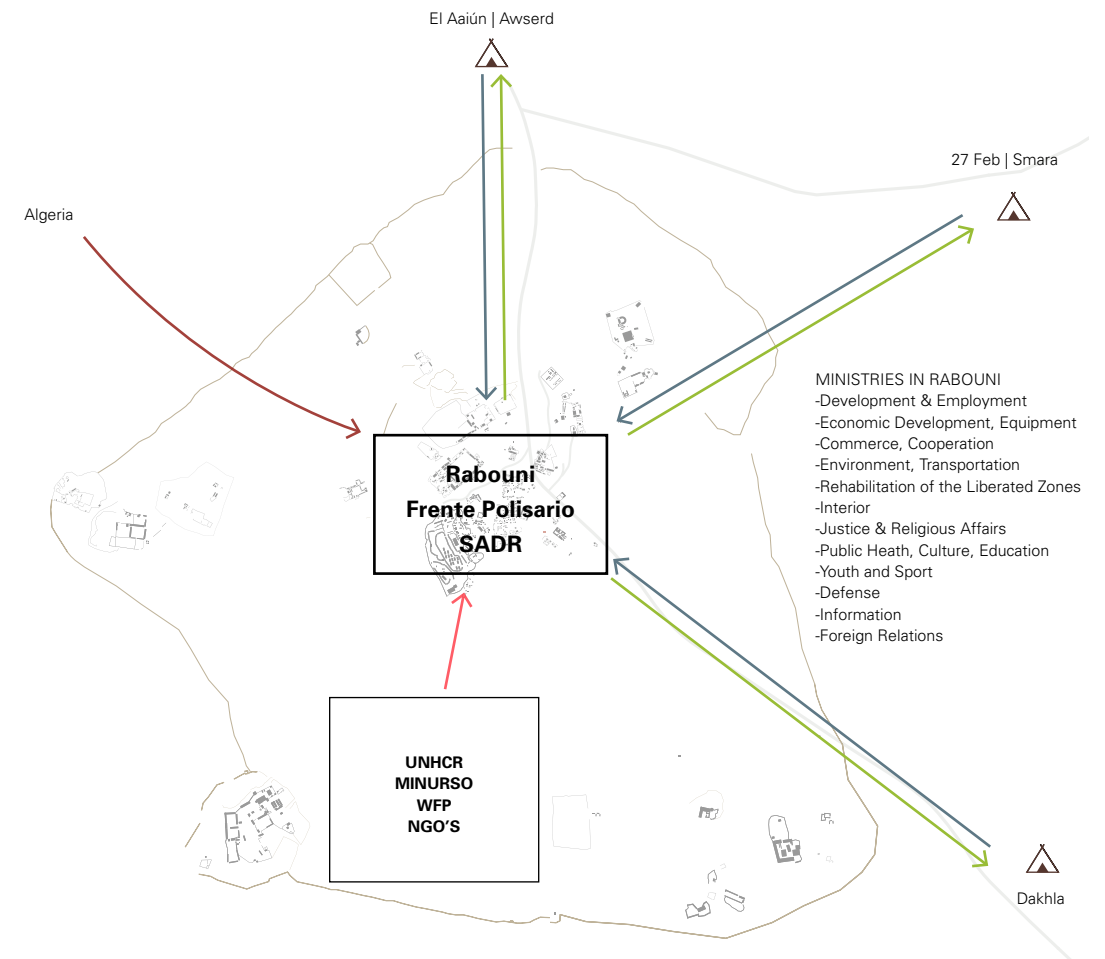
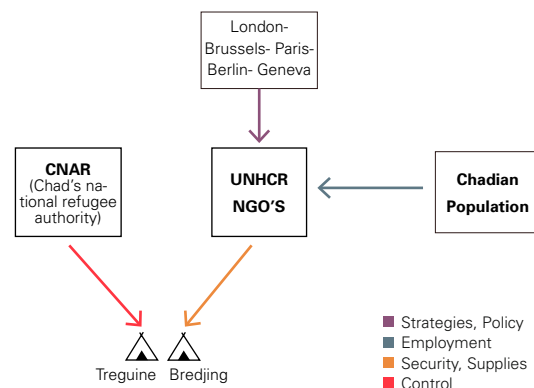


Hadjer Hadid Third- Party management

In Hadjer Hadid are mainly 4 actors playing together; NGO's, Chad's national refugee authority (CNAR), Chad's population and the refugees.

The strategies of NGO's are developed in Europe (Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, London, Geneva...) and can be used directly in the every day life in Treguine and Bredjing.

The influence of the different actors is unplanned, as well the urban development of Hadjer Hadid. Chad's population, NGO's and CNAR are set next to each other. They have adopted to each other.

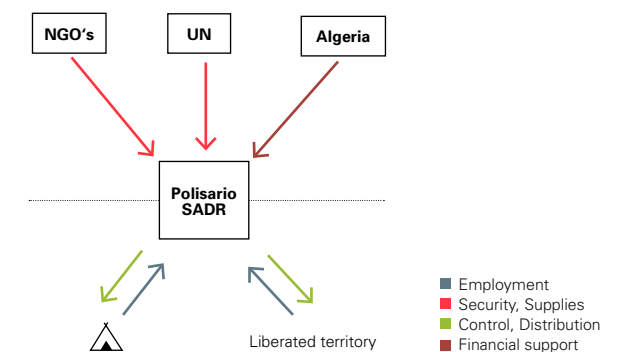


Rabouni Self- Management

International aid as friendly states, multi- governmental organisations or NGO's have to work through SADR/ Polisario in Rabouni. They develop strategies with the Sahraoui government.

Also geographically the SADR government differs from other refugee camps. They managed to create a pure administration settlement, Rabouni.

Container dominate Rabouni's expression. It doesn't look like a refugee camp. There is no live in it, only work.





ADMINISTRATION

“POLISARIO/ SADR will be prepared to transfer their administrative structure from the camps to the territory...”¹

The Sahraoui have developed a remarkable administrative structure.

On the heat of the structure of Polisario, which proclaimed the Saharan Arabic Democratic Republic, Polisario acts on the international level. It works on diplomatic efforts to earn political legitimacy.

On the national level SADR is the politic centre in exile. SADR has about twelve ministries and a parliament of 53 members in its head quarter in Rabouni.

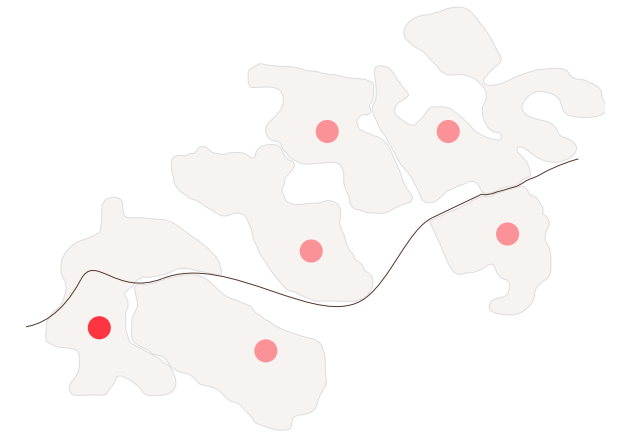
At a grass-root level is the camp with a lived nationalism of the Sahraoui refugees. They are self-managed with local elected functionaries. The functionaries can be seen as capillaries of the general distribution in Rabouni.

The aid of organisations or friendly states arrives in Rabouni and is distributed by functionaries to the Dairas and Barrios. (see diagram on the right).

Rabouni is the administration, military and distribution centre. Multi- Governmental organisations and NGOs have to work through SADR ministries to reach the camps.

As a consequence all aid from abroad has to develop their strategies in corporation with the government in Rabouni.

¹Bhatia, Michael (2001)



Daira centre ●

The regional administration and military centre of SADR is in Rabouni.

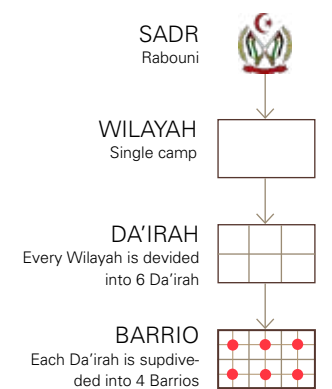
They manage all the Wilayahs (camps), which are divided into 6 Dairahs (districts). Each of this Dairahs is further subdivided into 4 Barrios (neighbourhoods).

The Wilayahs contain 6 primary schools and one hospital.

Each Dairah has one medical clinic in the Daira- centre.

Barrios are at Polisario's grassroots- level and contain around 200 tents.

The images show one of this Daira-centres, the centre of Elgelta in El Aaiún.





Mohamed Lamine, Mayor of El Aaiún

photo: by Manuel Herz



Wilayah administration, El Aaiún (photo: by Manuel Herz)

Mayor of El Aaiún

On a Tuesday morning we had an appointment with the Mayor of El Aaiún, Mohamed Lamine. He was appointed in 2008. Before, he was minister of the Interior. Every 4 years the mayor of a Wilayah (camp) is appointed by the national secretary/Polisario, the district councils and the directors of the functional committees.

Administration of Wilayahs

The national secretary is the highest institution and acts over all Wilayahs (camps). Each Wilayah has six to seven Dairahs (district), which are managed by a district council and functional committees. (Children’s education, health and sanitation, judicial, production/crafts, food and supplies/ provisions). The functional committees try to organise parties, sport activities and are responsible for the distribution of food, water, gas and other supplies which arrive from Rabouni.

The institutions don’t have any budget for plans. They depend on the annual plan, made by the base congress. But resources are limited. Item the annual plan independent on the financial support of international aid. The mayor appoints the difficulty of managing the camp:

“...It’s hart to be mayor of El Aaiún. I count days until the end of my period...”

Shaping camps

We asked Mohamed Lamine about the influence of the

“The definition of “city” can not be used for the camps. We have many tents in our settlement. We can’t live without them...”

Mohamed Lamine, mayor of El Aaiún

camp- development. The map of the camps changed since the refugee exodus to Algeria.

At the arrival in the area around Tindouf, streets and areas for tents were fixed.

Time passed by- many girls got married. When a girl gets married, she has to live close to her mother. The mother has to teach her daughter how to sew and set up a tent, how to cook, how to educate children... The camps became more dense, the clear structure disappears.

If someone intends to enlarge his home, he has to get the permission of the responsible Dairah- council.

In between Dairahs or outside of the camp, the popular council of the Wilayah has to decide.

An other significant factor are the markets. The construction of markets was spontaneously. At the beginning there was only one market per Dairah. After the cease-fire men came back and built business. Since a few years, the Sahraouis try to enlarge their small economies. More and more shops were built.

Camps as a city?

In terms of Mohamed Lamide, the definition of “city” can not be used for the camps. “We have many tents in our settlement. We can’t live without them...”

Further camps have no infrastructure and in the summer live is very slow, very different.

“Refugees live under harsh conditions, most children never saw their homeland, sometimes international aid arrives too late...”



WORKING

The Sahraoui family primarily depends on several international aid such as ECHO, WFP, Oxfam, UNHCR etc. However since the cease fire in 1991 a small economy is slowly growing in the camps. Men came back from the army into their families. Out of boredom, they started to find work. If they got some financial support of an uncle, Spanish family... they were able to create their own business.

Polisario uses mainly local staff for the ministries, hospital, schools, constructions etc. They try to encourage the refugee people and avoid stagnation in the exile. However jobs are rare.

The percentage of educated Sahraoui's, going to universities abroad has risen since 1976 (10%) by today (90%). Friendly states like Libya, Cuba and Spain provide scholarships. Young people can leave the camps to study in universities. They have the opportunity to learn western languages (English, French, Spanish...) and can benefit from an employment with humanitarian agencies (UNHCR/NGO's). Jobs with aid agencies offer income and access to other resources. Nevertheless these people can rarely find opportunities to use their knowledge in the camps.

For refugees without any language skills it is often hart to find any employment outside of the camps. They need international aid and have to keep goats or sheep.

Sahraoui refugees receive temporary permission to leave camps. But it is almost impossible for them to work legally in Algeria or anywhere else abroad.



Mechanic in El Aaiún

Development of working

The refugee's economic activities tend to be based in informal sectors, oriented towards generating quick cash and characterized by low financial risk. (buying and selling goods, services as hairdresser, constructor...)

The income depends whether a refugee gets remittances, has his own small business or works for the government or any organisations (e.g. NGO's).

Till 1991 the Sahraoui refugee camps were almost only dependent on international aid. Men were in the army, women had to manage the camps and care about children.

The demilitarization of men in 1991 transformed the landscape of the camps because of boredom and economic development. Dwellings got much larger - extra rooms were built. Men started to think on developing their own business. A small scale independent economy arose. Secondary large quantities of cash were introduced and Spain sent pension to former Sahraoui soldiers in colonial army.

At the same time some families started to make benefit of remittances from some family members living abroad.

http://www.vastsaharaaktioner.se/files/Nut_surv_Version%20EN%20oct_08.pdf
download: 08 May 2011

In the 1990s children were sent in vacations to Spain. It got another dominant economic input. Returning refugee children brought cash gifts of about 50 to 350 Euros back into the camps.

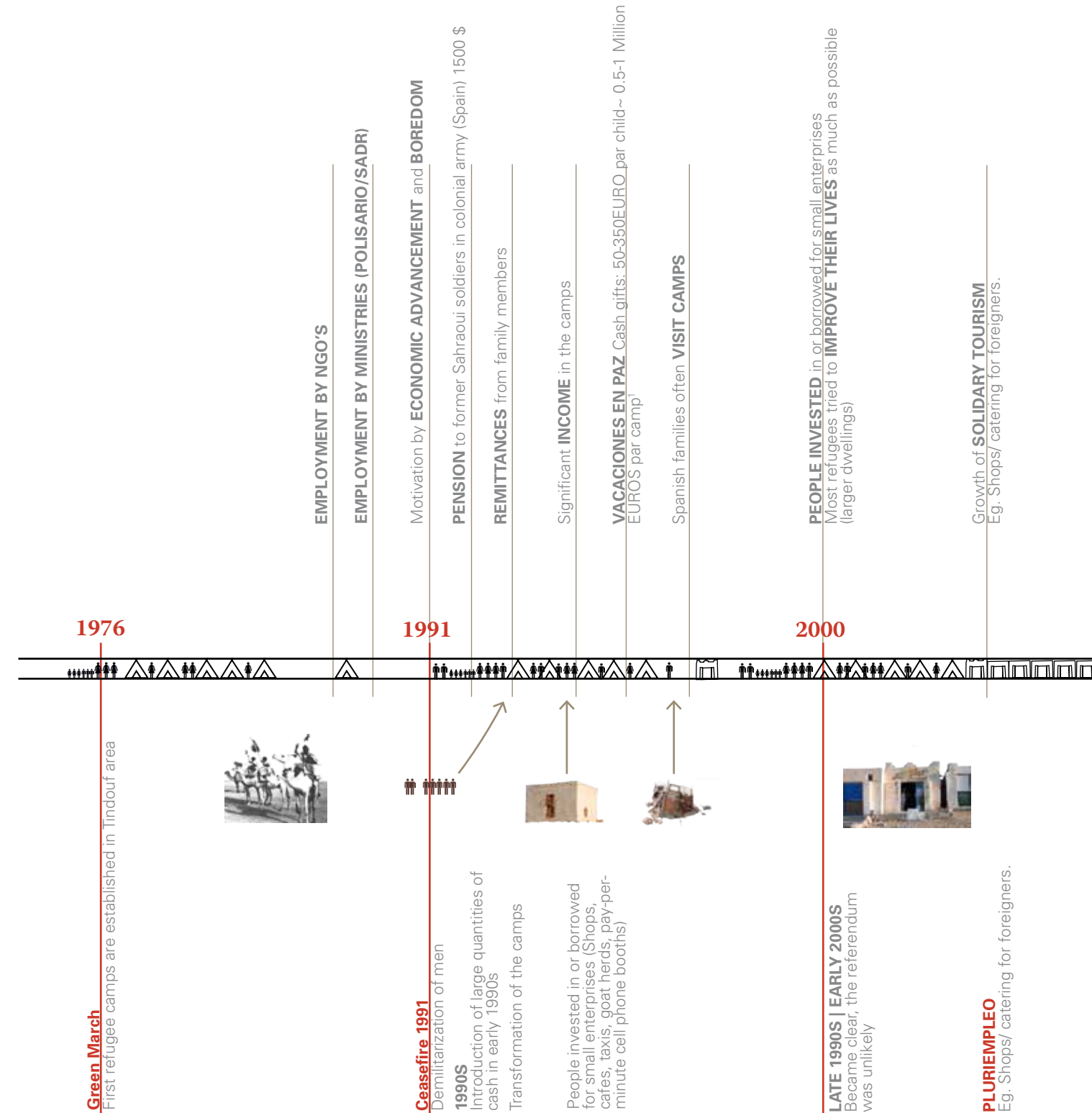
After 2000 UN placed the referendum on indefinite hold. Therefore most refugees wanted to improve their lives as much as possible. They kept investing for small enterprises. More shops were built, taxi service was offered, goat herds enlarged..

In spite of all this factors only 3% of Sahraouis keep a formal work as primary source of income.

A Norwegian Nutritional and Food Security Survey in October 2008 showed that 5% have no income, 25% have savings, 9% loans and only 3% formal work as primary source of income. ¹

This 3% of formal workers are mainly employed in SADR ministries or some NGO's.

The following interviews show, most people don't have a fix income. The major part of them works in an own business and has studied abroad.



Development of work and economy



Engineer of agriculture



Shop keeper



Civil guard



Brick manufacturer



Butcher



Mechanic



Hospital director



Donkey transport



Gardener



Moderator



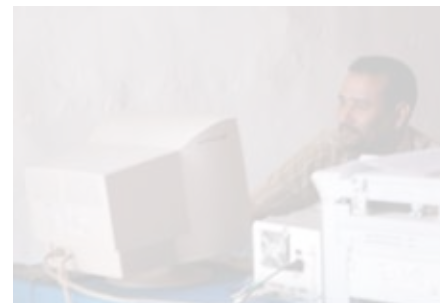
Nurse



Tire mechanic



Taxi driver



Student/ Builder



Photographer



Petrol station keeper



Chemist



Mechanic





Taxi driver

Name	Bechar Lamén
Age	52 years
Civil status	Married, 1 son
Address	Daira Edchera El Aioun
Education	No education
Language	Hassanya, basic of Spanish
Working hours	Interdependent of guests
Employer	POLISARIO
Income	Up to 250 Euros a month

Bechar Lamén is one of the first Taxi drivers POLISARIO employed. He is asked to be a personal driver of groups of journalists, researchers or students.

People say he keeps no driver licence- nobody cares.

POLISARIO cares about visitors of the camps. First, there was a single hostel in Rabouni. Every visitor's main accommodation was in Rabouni. The driver led the guest to every camp they wanted to visit.

Now there are more hostels (Protocol) in camps. The visitors are divided onto the 4 camps and get a car with a driver of POLISARIO.

The taxi driver works irregular. As soon as they get a group they have to be available full-time.



Family Garden project El Aaiún



Engineer of agriculture

Name	Taleb Brahim
Civil status	Married
Address	Smara
Education	Studied engineer of agriculture in Syria, Mauretania and Lybia
Language	Hassanya, French, English
Employer	25-36 employees, dependent on work
Income	No comments

Taleb Brahim studied engineer of agriculture in Syria. After he got graduated, he worked in several gardens for more than one year.

In 1998 he returned to the refugee camps. Back home in Smara Taleb Brahim tried to plant a garden. In 2003 he started growing vegetables, but it cost too much water and the production was very small. Several years passed without success.

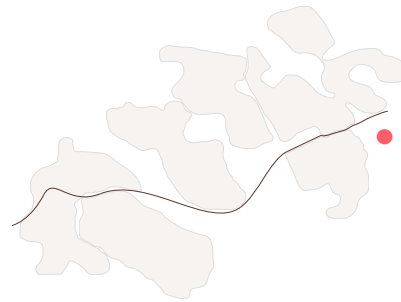
One day he met Professor Van Cotthem who introduced Taleb Brahim the "Terracottem". Terracottem is a proprietary mixture of polymers, fertilizers, growth precursors and carrier material. It increases the plant's root development/ plant growth and reduces the need of watering.

After several tests with different plants, Taleb Brahim succeeded in using the soil conditioner Terracottem, water and fertilizer. He managed to plant garlic, courgette, beans, tomato, watermelons, canary melons, lettuce, sweet pepper and Cactus as fodder for goats, sheep, and camels.

In 2006 Taleb Brahim lanced the project "family gardens in the refugee camps of the people of the Western Sahara" in corporation with UNICEF. The main objective of this project is to provide fresh food to refugees. It is supplement to the food offered by WFP.

After the attack in 2007 on the UN- building in Algier, UNICEF didn't want to support the family- garden project anymore. Taleb Brahim had to find other founds to keep going on.

Today some American, Spanish, French and Swiss NGO's support the family- garden project in the camps.

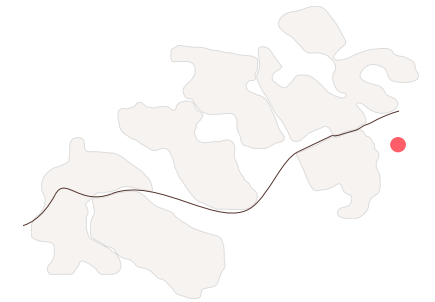


Brick manufacturer

Name	Hassan
Age	45 years
Civil status	Married, children
Address	Daira Amgala El Aioun
Education	No Education
Language	Hassanya
Working hours	08:00- 12:00/-14:00 depends on the heat
Employer	Self-employed
Income	Interdependent 100 bricks = 1000 Dinar

The best construction time is in March, April and May. During winter stones need 4-5 days to dry, in summer 1-2 days. Hassan needs mainly sand and water from wells. The tooling equipment Hassan had to buy himself. In the busy month he gets aid of friends. Further he needs someone, transporting the bricks to the construction site, which he has to pay for.

At the beginning, everyone made bricks himself. Since 1995 Hassan started to produce bricks to sell.



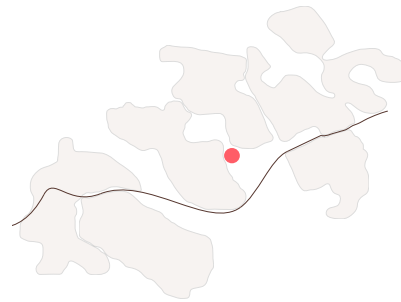
Donkey transport

Name	Salek
Age	27 years
Civil status	Married 1 son
Address	Daira Amgala El Aioun
Education	None
Language	Hassanya
Working hours	Depends on demand
Employer	Self employed
Income	Depends on the distance

On the edge of El Aioun we found some brick manufacturer and a donkey transport. Very calm they produce bricks and bring them to the site by a donkey transport.

Salem was asked for the transport. He is 27 years old and has no education. Lucky him, he got a donkey from his family. His uncle sold all his goods in the liberated areas and bought Salem a donkey.

Now, Salem has his own business. For small distances he asks 100 Dinar per 100 bricks. For larger distances he goes up to 300 Dinar per 100 bricks.



Shop/ Petrol station keeper

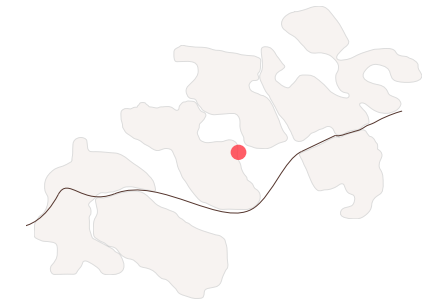
Name	Mohamed Moctar
Age	27 years
Civil status	Single
Address	Manolo Shop, Daira Amgala El Aaiún
Education	Studied Literature in Algeria
Language	Hassanya, French, English
Working hours	Self determining
Employer	Self employed
Income	Interdependent of work (40% of the price)

Mohamed keeps a grocery shop and a petrol station. Working hours he defines himself.

Mohamed built his shop with the aid of some friends. He has to travel once or more a week to Tindouf. In Tindouf he gets all goods from different shops.



photo: by Jonas Wirth



Tire Mechanic

Name	Brahim Mahmud
Age	30 years
Civil status	Single
Address	Daira Hagunia El Aaiún
Education	Studied in Havana Cuba
Language	Hassanya, Spanish
Working hours	Self determine
Employer	Self employed
Income	Up to 250 Euro a month

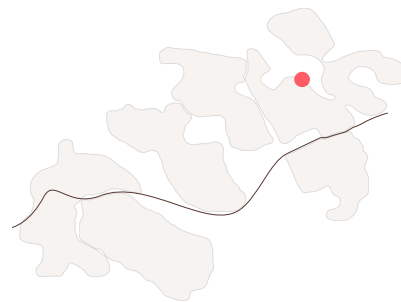
Brahim keeps his “pneumatique” close to his friend Mohamed Moctar (see shop keeper). They work close together. Sometimes one person looks after the two businesses.

Working hours he defines himself.

Brahim built his shop with the aid of some friends. From time to time he travels to Tindouf with Mohamed Moctar, to get more tires or new material.



photos: by Anna Ebnetter



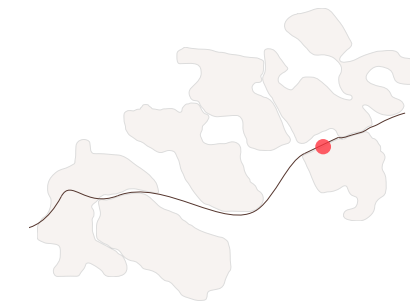
Butcher

Name	Ali
Age	30 years
Civil status	Single
Address	Daira Edchera El Aaiún
Education	No education
Language	Hassanya
Working hours	06:00-...
Employer	Family
Income	Up to 1'000 Euros a month

Ali works in the butcher's shop of his uncle. The boss slaughters camels in the morning and delivers the meet to the shops. Ali starts working at 6 o'clock in cutting meet.

He is an employer of his uncle, Mohamed. Ali learned all from him.

At the beginning Mohamed found a Spanish, who financed some camels. Mohamed keeps two Filialen. 50-200 people visit the two shops par day.

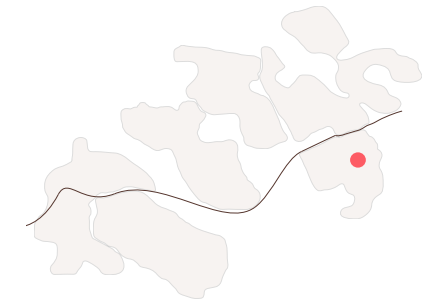
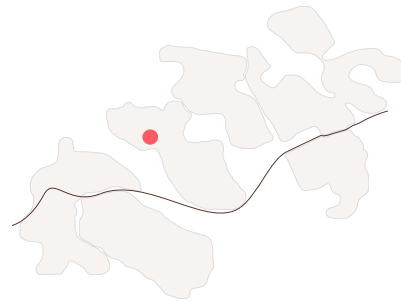


Chemist

Name	Fatima Lessen
Age	27 years
Civil status	Married, 3 children
Address	Daira Amgala El Aaiún
Education	Studied pharmacy in Algeria
Language	Hassanya, French
Working hours	09:00- 13:00 16:00- 19:00 Friday closed
Employer	Self- employed Family
Income	Enough to feed family

Fatima Lessen cares about her children and the Pharmacy. She lives in the same building. Mostly she keeps the door closed while playing with her children in the garden.

Her husband, Mouhamed Embarek Saleh Deihan, travels frequently to Mouretania or Algeria to buy herbs and medicaments.



Hospital Director

Name Nayem Mohamed Ali
 Age 51 years
 Civil status Married, children
 Address Daira Hagunia | El Aaiún
 Education Studied nurse in Western Sahara & Algeria
 Language Hassanya, Spanish
 Working hours 08:30- 13:00 | 16:00-18:00
 Employer Government
 Income non

Nayem Mohamed Ali works mainly with women. He instructs them for support. His main task is to hand medicine out to the refugees.

He stayed in Western Sahara until the 8th class. Then he was sent to Algeria for education by the government, Polisario.

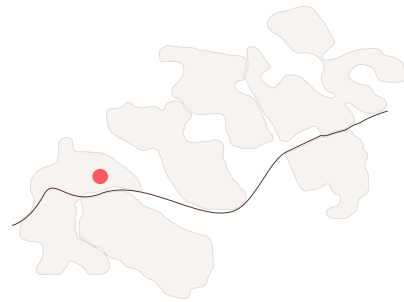
Nurse

Name Nayem Ali
 Age 38 years
 Civil status Married | 2 children
 Address Center Daira Amgala | El Aaiún
 Education Studied in Cuba for 10 years
 Language Hassanya, Spanish
 Working hours Sommer: 08:00-12:00 | 17:00- 19:00
 Winter: 09:00-13:00 | 16:00-18:00
 Friday free

Employer Government
 Income Irregular

Out of the need of nurses, Nayem Ali decided to study medicine in Cuba. He is the only one amongst his brother and sisters, who was sent to Cuba. He likes his profession. Mostly he has to care about children and pregnant women.

Nayem Ali sees his work as a part of the liberation movement. He doesn't ask for income.

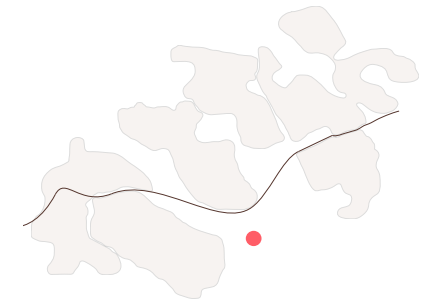


Mechanic

Name Mehedi
 Age 23 years
 Civil status Single
 Address Daira Elgelta | El Aaiún
 Education Secondary school in Libya
 Language Hassanya, Spanish
 Working hours 09:00-13:00 | 16:00- 19:00, Friday closed
 Employer Draft, three friends
 Income Up to 1'000 Euros a month

Mehedi built a garage with two other friends. Mainly they repair cars. From time to time they sell cars. Next to the garage they own a petrol station.

Most of the particulate material, Mehedi has to get in Algeria. He takes a car to Tindouf, buy all he needs and returns by lorry. Some part of his assortment is from Mauritania. There is also some second-hand particulate material of Spain. The cars, they sell from time to time come from Spain, too.



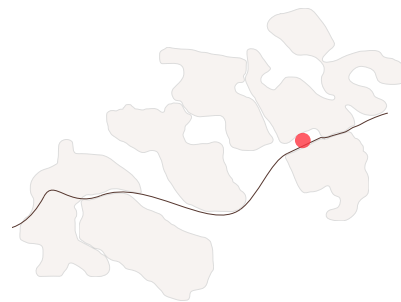
Civil guard

Name Balsa Salam
 Age 20 years
 Civil status Single
 Address Daira Bucraa | El Aaiún
 Education Two years in military academy in El Aaioun
 Language Hassanya
 Working hours 2 weeks of working | 2 weeks holidays
 Employer Polisario
 Income No comment

It is voluntary to enter into the army till the liberation of Western Sahara or until death. The main ideology is to achieve their self-determination, to make the country free.

There are some soldiers already 60 years old. They still keep fighting for independence.

In the military academy in El Aaioun mainly trains soldiers fire protection and civil defence.



Moderator

Name	Ali
Age	24 years
Civil status	Single
Address	Daira Edchera El Aioun
Education	Two years Moderator- School in El Aaiún
Language	Hassanya, Spanish
Working hours	09:00- 13:00 Friday free
Employer	RASD
Income	None

Ali works as a Moderator for a youth programme. He tries to discuss important themes/ problems of the youth. It is broadcasted in Hassanya, to keep the Sah-raoui language.

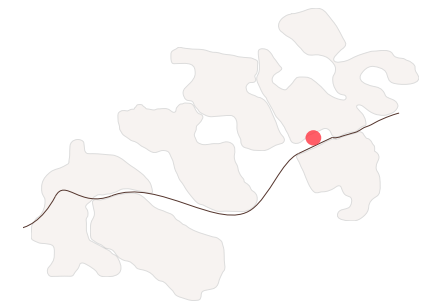
After two years of education, Ali could start working in the studio of RASD in El Aaiún.

Ali learned Spanish in the elementary school and several holidays in Bilbao. (Vacaciones en Paz)

The very first initiative for a radio station was introduced in Awserd. El Aaiún is the second RASD- station in the camps.



photo: by Franziska Biner

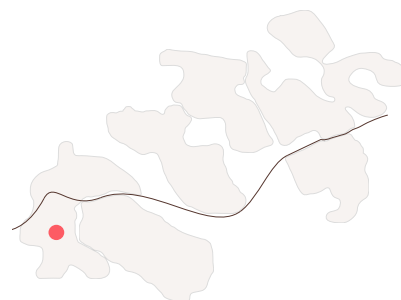


Moderator

Name	Lala
Age	22 years
Civil status	Single
Address	Daira Hagunia El Aaiún
Education	Compulsory school
Language	Hassanya, Spanish
Working hours	08:00- 13:00
Employer	Radio Nacional de la RASD El Aioun
Income	None

Lala works in the morning only. She has to prepare broadcasts especially about problems and everyday life of youth.

The youth programme was founded three month ago. The radio broadcasts in El Aaiún, only. There are plans to introduce similar concepts in Answered and Smara.

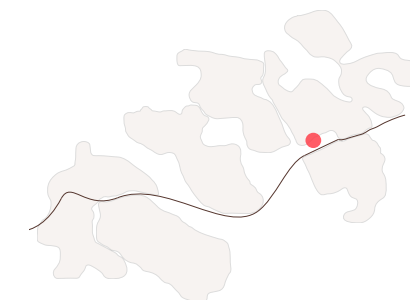


Mechanic

Name Mohammed Salim Mala
 Age 30 years
 Civil status Married
 Address Daira Elgelta | El Aaiún
 Education Elementary School in El Aioun
 Language Hassanya, basics of Spanish
 Working hours No opening hours
 Employer Father
 Income Enough for living

Between the market street and the Daira centre of Elgelta in El Aaiún, Mohammed Salim Mala repairs cars. The car is parked on the sand road. Machines stand free around the car.
 From time to time Mohammed disappears close by in a small room, getting some tools.
 His father built the very small building for a storage. The work is done outside, on the street.

Mohammed was born in El Aaiún. He went to compulsory school and learned some Spanish. His father taught him repairing cars.



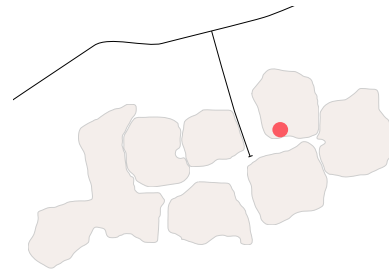
Shop keeper

Name Khalif
 Age 30 years
 Civil status Single
 Address Daira Mahbes | Smara
 Education Studied informatics in Cuba
 Language Hassanya, Spanish
 Working hours 09:00- 13:00 | 15:00- 20:00
 Employer Friend
 Income Enough for living

Walking up the market street in Smara, music comes out from a small door. A tribe of people hide the entrance while listening to the beat- 'Arabeton'.

Inside of this small shop, a young man sits behind a computer, choosing songs- Khalif.

Khalif studied informatics in Cuba. Now he works in a friends's shop in Smara. He sells DVD's, magazines, music and a selection of office equipment. He likes Arabeton. It's Arabic Reggaeton. Clients can bring or buy a stick and Khalif puts a choice of music on it. Very proud Khalif let us listen to a big choice of songs of the world...



Photographer

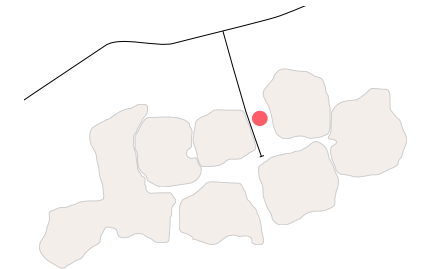
Name	Mohamed
Age	43 years
Civil status	Married
Address	Foto Sahara, Daira Mahbes Smara
Education	Studied in Cuba
Language	Hassanya, Spanish, French
Working hours	08:30- 12:30 06:00- 10:30
Employer	Self employed
Income	Interdependent of work

Close to the new market in Smara an inconspicuous lettering announces Mohamed's photo-shop; Photo Sahara. Through a narrow door on the site we enter into a colourful small room. The walls are decorated with pictures of famous persons and a big flag of Cuba.

Mohamed studied in Cuba. Back in the refugee camps he opened a photo-studio. His main work is to take and develop pictures. Further he offers photocopy and plastification services as well currency exchange.



photo: by Franziska Biner

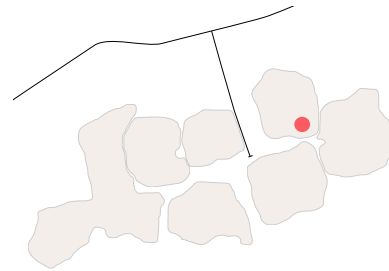


Gardener

Name	Mohamed
Age	23 years
Civil status	Married
Address	Daira Mahbes Smara
Education	Studied in Cuba and Algeria
Language	Hassanya, Spanish
Working hours	Every day except Friday
Employer	25-36 employees, dependent on work
Income	No comments

During work Mohamed lives in a small building in the garden. The employees are divided in two working shifts. Half of them work in the morning, the other part in the afternoon. Depending on season there are more or less employees.

The plantation contains carrots, onions and feed for animals. Picnic is not allowed.



Student/ Painter

Name	Ali
Age	21 years
Civil status	Single
Address	Daira Mahbes Smara
Education	Student in Algeria
Language	Hassanya, Spanish, French
Working hours	Flexible 2- 3 weeks
Employer	Father
Income	None

Ali is a student in Algeria and builds an annex to the existing shop of his father. His father asked his two sons, a friend of Ali and the son-in-law to enlarge the shop in 2-3 weeks. Everyone has the knowledge and equipment to construct. Because of the rain, the Sahraouis have to reconstruct their dwellings from time to time.



Journalist

Name	Bechir
Age	42 years
Civil status	Married 1 son, 1 daughter
Address	Works in Rabouni, lives in Awserd
Education	Studied Arabic literature in Algeria
Language	Hassanya, French
Working hours	
Employer	RASD
Income	4000 Dinar per month

Bechir studied Arabic literature in Algeria. After getting graduated, Bechir was asked to come back into the refugee camps to work in the ministry of information. He was employed in the information centre for several years. In 2010 he became director of the ministry.

He feels himself responsible to inform the refugees about human rights, world news, medical aspects as vaccinations, distribution of food or gas and other themes.





Goat barns

About 43% of the households have some livestock and most of them have 1.2 goats/ sheep.¹

When you look at the camp's map you find many small black dots on the boarder of the Dairas. These are all goat barns. By strolling around in the camps, goats appear from every corner.

When the sun is up families, mostly women, feed them and leave the barns open. In the evening at sun set, goats are collected and returned into their cot.

There is a huge variety in between goat barns. All of them are unique and individually designed. Families built their goat barns where ever they want,

preferable close to their home. Size and material depends on number of goats/ sheep and what is available for construction.

No one cleans the barns. If the barn is not visible any more, families built a new one just next to the old one. The image on the left shows a trace for a newer, bigger barn.

In general, the goat barn's plan is round. The basic framework is made with a fence around a wooden construction. Then the patchwork starts.

Fences are fitted with components as: Corrugated iron sheets, coats, plastic panels, fridges, doors, car body panels, blankets, traffic signs...

¹ http://www.vastsaharaaktionen.se/files/Nut.surv_Version%20EN%20oct_08.pdf, download: 08 May 2011



DRAFT

© ETH Studio Basel



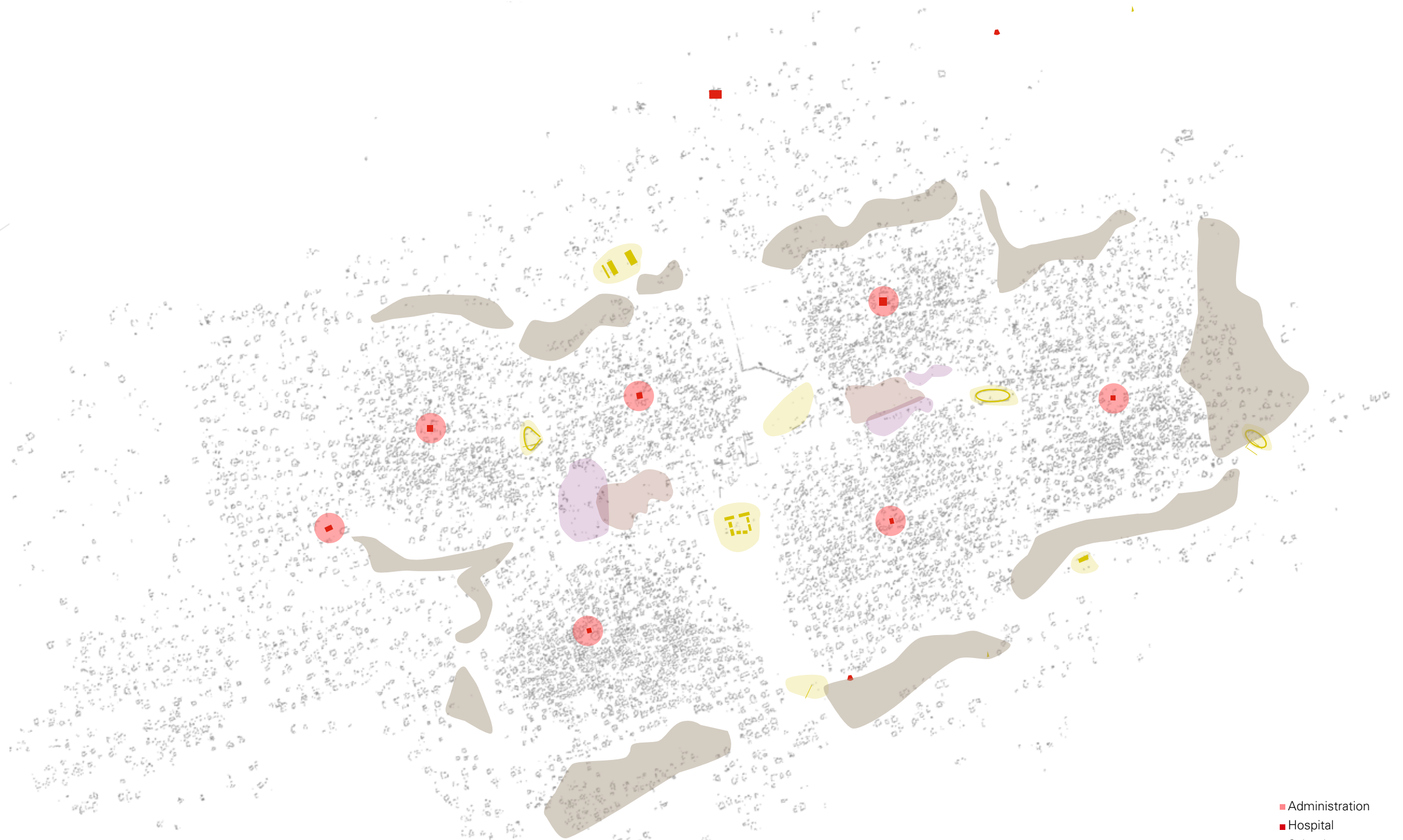


El Aaiún

In El Aaiún every Daira contains a market. Garage- areas are not necessarily next to the markets. There are much more garage zones.

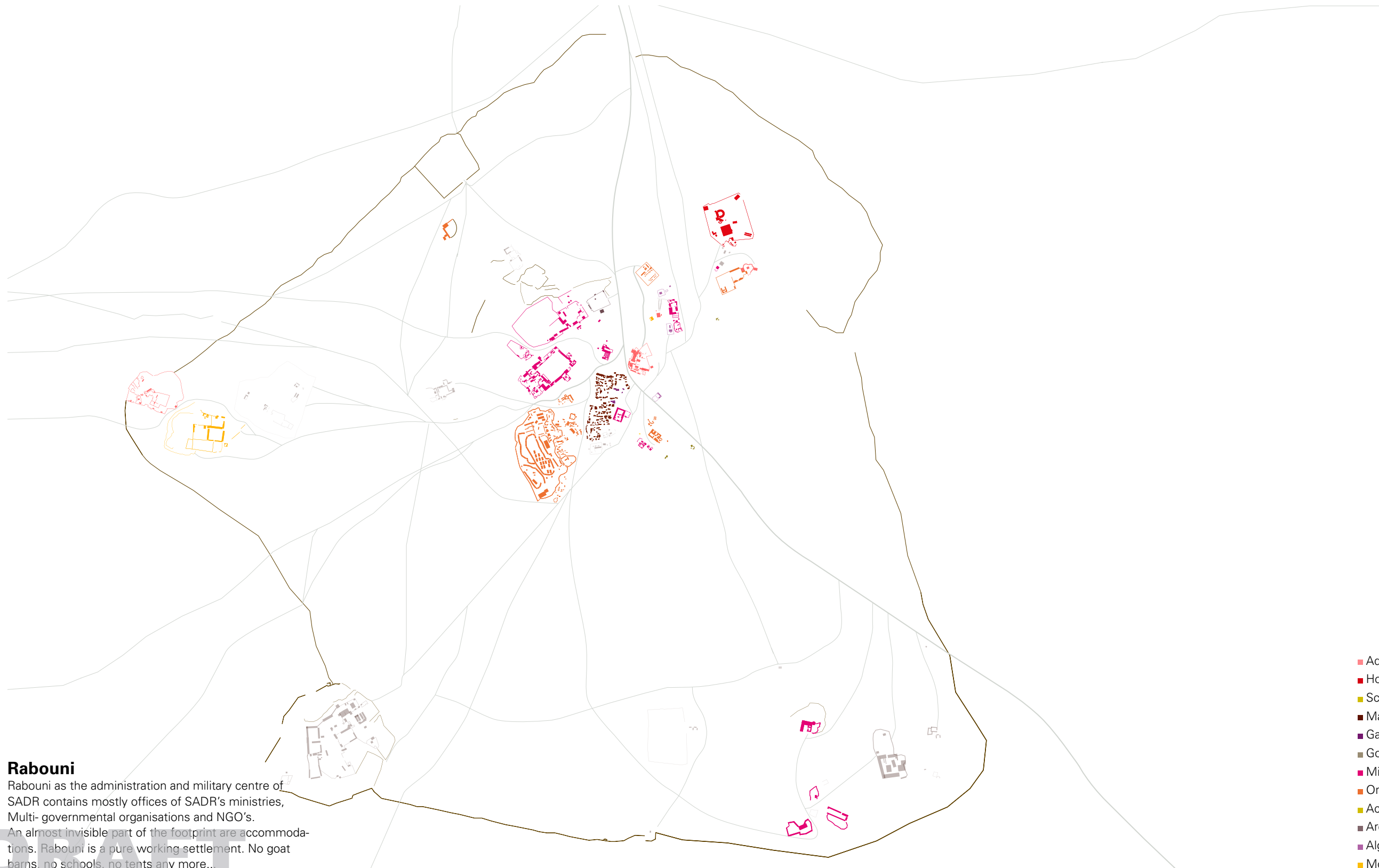
The plan of El Aaiún is not as regular as the one of Smara. Goat barns were set around Dairas, consequently don't follow El Aaiún's borders.

- Administration
- Hospital
- Schools
- Market
- Garages
- Goat barns



Smara

Has mainly two centres. An older and newer one. Garages and markets are set next to each other. Dwellings start to sprite out and goat barns don't built the borders any more.



Rabouni

Rabouni as the administration and military centre of SADR contains mostly offices of SADR's ministries, Multi- governmental organisations and NGO's.

An almost invisible part of the footprint are accommodations. Rabouni is a pure working settlement. No goat barns, no schools, no tents any more...

- Administration
- Hospital
- Schools
- Market
- Garages
- Goat barns
- Ministries
- Organisations
- Accommodation
- Archive/ Museum
- Algeria
- Mosque



“...The Sahraoui refugees are emancipated,
educated and have a rigid discipline...”

Mohammad Arif chief of the- UNHCR office in Algeria

© ETH Studio Basel

CONCLUSION

Prefiguring nation

35 years passed by and the Sahraouis still live in the area around Tindouf. They are still refugees. Refugees which created a unique system out of the harsh circumstances. Out of Polisario's strong leadership and rigid discipline, they managed to form a nation in exile. There is no other refugee camp which is self-managed like the Sahraouis Refugee camps. They are a unique appearance in the world of refugees as we saw in the comparison to Hadjer Hadid.

Polisario/SADR (Saharan Arabic Democratic Republic) developed a state in exile, which controls all the camps and selects international aid. Polisario is the only party in the camps and has a huge power in the everyday life in the camps.

Algeria assures Polisario a considerable independence in the refugee camps around Tindouf. Check-points mark borders between Algeria and the Sahraoui camps. It's a sign for Sahraoui's autonomy, as a state in exile.

Creating urban spaces

Geographically the Sahraoui have a single camp for administration which is set on the intersection of the main asphalted roads- Rabouni.

Rabouni transformed from a place of settlement into a place of administration. There are no tents any more, restaurants and shops spread and a bus line network was introduced. All ministries of SADR have their offices in Rabouni. The main access of international aid to the refugee camps acts in Rabouni. It can also be seen as a reloading and distribution point, managed and controlled by

Polisario/SADR.

Everyday commuters travel from the closer camps to the administration centre for work. Uniquely



El Aaiún, construction site

the Sahraoui refugees have the chance to work in ministries of SADR or NGO bases. It's only a small percentage of refugees with a formal income. In general refugee's economic activities tend to be based in informal sectors.¹

“The definition of “city” can not be used for the camps. We have many tents in our settlement. We can't live without them...”

Mohamed Lamine, mayor of El Aaiún

Before the cease-fire in 1991 women managed and defended the camps, looked after the children, cared about the distribution of supplies... The emancipation of the Sahraoui women is unique in the world of Islam, as Mohammad Arif (chief of UNHCR- office of Algeria) mentioned. Still, women play an important role in the camp's management.

When men turned back from the army in 1991 settlement changed. Out of boredom and economic development the everyday life in the camps changed. Markets spread out developments enlarged, goat barns proliferated, and new services were offered. Families got a small irregular income. They could improve their standard of living.

At the same time the percentage education arose from 10% at the beginning to 90% today. Young Sahraouis have the possibility to study abroad. Thanks to scholarship with friendly States (e.g. Cuba, Spain) the profit to learn other languages. Therefore they may find work in an NGO in Rabouni and can help developing camps...

Nevertheless they are not self-sufficiency. They are still strongly dependant on outside aid.

¹Karen Jacobsen (2005), The Economic Life of Refugees



DRAFT
© ETH Studio Basel

Smara, Refugees coming back from work in Rabouni

DRAFT

© ETH Studio Basel