



What Lies Behind the ESISC Report

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Never have the media been so influential in determining the course of the events on the conflict in Western Sahara as during the current Saharai uprising. The Moroccan regime has already poured millions of dollars into its campaign of propaganda and misinformation which have included an entire range of efforts: free trips for influential people, bribing politicians and intellectuals; and, most important, money for election campaigns in Europe. Makhzen has a severe problem with the truth and has made of mercenary journalism the bedrock of its propaganda campaigns.

This brings us to the report on Polisario Front recently published by the **European Strategic Intelligence & Security Center (ESISC)** and on its president, **Claude Moniquet**. Before the publication of this report, Morocco - and its terrorist threat -

seemed to be the focus on most of Moniquet's articles and presentations. But, suddenly, there is a shift in focus. The terrorist infested state is no longer viewed as the threat it once was. To try to understand this shift, it has become necessary to shed light on some chronological events that might explain the reason behind the unconvincing report of the ESISC and, particularly, whether the reason was money, fear, or both?

- In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Casablanca, on May 2003, experts like Claude Moniquet - president of the ESISC - and the well-known Spanish magistrate Baltasar Garzon who handled high-profile terrorism cases, had warned of the threat of terrorist cells that had taken root in Morocco. Moniquet, who is considered a

considered a terrorist researcher, was quoted in an article on the Washington Post (October 14th, 2004) saying that "we cannot exaggerate the threat" and expressed his believe that "the terrorist threat in Morocco and the Moroccan community in Europe is real."

- On September 2003, Claude Moniquet wrote an article - in French- under the title '[The results of the elections in Morocco hide the reality of the islamist advance](#)'. He clearly criticised the Moroccan regime and its political and official denial of the risks of terrorism, by creating a confusion that could potentially divert part of the society of the democratic process and push it towards violence.
- A year later, Reuters reported that Mr. Moniquet was attacked by Rachid Belabed, a Belgian of Moroccan descent. Mr. Belabed was waiting outside the studios of a TV in Brussels when Claude Moniquet walked out after a show on terrorism. According to Moniquet's testimony, Belabed approached him stating that "he wanted to talk to [him]". Belabed hit him in the head and kicked him when he fell on the ground. Moniquet was later treated at a clinic for his injuries.
- On March 2005, Mr. Moniquet wrote an article for the Atlantis Institute titled: "[A year after Madrid \[attacks\], the terrorist threat in Europe is stronger than ever](#)". In the article, he stressed that the upcoming events in Morocco will have a strong influence on Europe. "If terrorism is not eradicated, its consequences will be felt in the Old Continent", explains Mr. Moniquet, "due mostly to the presence, in Europe, of large Moroccan communities".
- On April 2005, during a hearing before the US House of Representatives, Mr. Moniquet presented a testimony as director general of the ESISC. In his testimony, similarly damning as the others, he warned about the reality of the terrorist threat and expressed his concerns over the lack of social and democratic reforms in Morocco. "Developments in Morocco in years to come will have a major influence on the situation in Europe", he argued.
- On June 2005, Claude Moniquet becomes the focus, and the target of the Moroccan press. He is slammed and denigrated by the Makhzen propaganda machine. He's called the "self-appointed terrorism expert". The weekly Maroc-Hebdo, spearheading the campaign, wrote that "[such misinformation cannot and should not go without a reaction](#)", in response to his testimony before the US Congress. The press wondered about his "real motivations".
- On November 2005, the ESISC issues its report in question: "The Polisario Front, Credible

Negotiations Partner or After-effect of the Cold War and Obstacle to a Political Solution in Western Sahara?" .

After outlining the above mentioned events, the credibility and timing of the report on Polisario Front raises some questions; What are its real motivations? Why so many misleading statements and deceptions? How could the ESISC so easily succumb, by whatever means, to the Makhzen's trap when other European Centers with good reputation did not?

Since the recent visit of Claude Moniquet to Morocco, the government controlled media presented a new member of the ESISC, in the person of Mohamed Ifkiren, a Moroccan, as vice-president of the Center. Morocco is in dire need for a third party view that shares its claims, and had sought the ESISC's help to buttress Makhzen's lines. Morocco is preparing the ground for the buildup of its future accusations against Polisario. All signs are starting to show that that's the path chosen aimed at discrediting the Polisario, and above all, to debilitate the civilian and peaceful uprising in the occupied territories of

Western Sahara. Polisario Front should strongly condemn this Moroccan campaign of defamation and distortion being delivered through the ESISC. The Makhzen - in its concerted campaign of misinformation to deceive the world community - was in search for a humanitarian organization denigrating Polisario to use as reference, and found it on France-Libertés. On Erik Jensen, found someone willing to sell his soul to the devil. Now, the hand-kissing government will be relying on the ESISC's 'expertise' on international security to spread its falsehoods.

The ESISC has failed to come up with any concrete evidence that Saharawis harbor resentment towards the West or profess violence. No respected international organization has ever suggested or deemed Polisario Front as a terrorist organization. So far, after over three decades of the existence of Polisario, none of those contentions mentioned by the report has panned out. ESISC's exaggerated rhetoric on the supposed Polisario threat to the rest of the world reveals the Center's lack of credibility and puts its reputation at stake.