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Comment by the Information and Press Department on the developments in Western Sahara

We have taken notice of the growing tension in the buffer strip at Guerguerat, a town near the Mauritanian border in the zone of responsibility of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Local protesters have been blocking traffic through the crossing point for the past few days.

We urge the parties to the Western Sahara settlement – Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO – to show maximum restraint, to refrain from taking steps that can exacerbate the situation, and to strictly comply with the ceasefire agreement.

Russia's consistent principled approach to the conflict in Western Sahara is that a fair and lasting peace can be achieved exclusively by political means based on international law, first of all UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and within the framework of procedures that correspond to the UN Charter principles and objectives. We call for the resumption of direct talks between Morocco and POLISARIO as soon as possible, for redoubling efforts to promote a settlement, in particular, the appointment of a new personal envoy of the UN Secretary-General for this purpose, and for ensuring MINURSO's safety and effective operation.

We will continue using our contacts with all the parties concerned to promote a mutually acceptable solution to this recurrent problem.