

Revealing Truths Behind the Western Sahara Conflict

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The recent return of Aminatou Haidar to Western Sahara in southern Morocco has sparked both national and international debate as to the future of the disputed region.

Her recent hunger strike has brought real focus to an area dubbed "Africa's Last Colony." One author claims, however, that worldwide leaders should not forget the past as he reveals the human rights violations that occurred to a forgotten group of prisoners.

"There is another side to the story that people have not heard," says Thomas Hollowell, who served a short stint with the Peace Corps in Morocco and is the author of the newly released *Allah's Garden: A True Story of a Forgotten War in the Sahara Desert of Morocco*. His book focuses on a Moroccan doctor's 24-year detention by a militant group vying for Western Sahara known as the Polisario. "The alternative to Morocco controlling Western Sahara would be a governing body built on manipulation who has committed grave crimes against humanity."

Through the doctor's plight, Hollowell's book describes Moroccan military and civilian prisoners who were captured by the Polisario guerilla-war movement and taken to prison camps in southwestern Algeria. While in captivity, these POWs were tortured and enslaved for decades to build up the area's infrastructure. "While I feel for Aminatou Haidar, I would not relate her to Gandhi," says the author. "While she is notable and courageous, through association, her struggle indirectly endorses a political organization who is unscrupulous and dangerous."

Though not a political book by definition, *Allah's Garden* strikes a controversial chord for those on both sides of the debate: those recognizing the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and those supporting Morocco's claim to Western Sahara.

Thomas Hollowell has authored two books and several articles for national and international publications. *Allah's Garden: A True Story of a Forgotten War in the Sahara Desert of Morocco*, ISBN 978-0964142398 (<http://www.allahs-garden.com/>), is published by Tales Press in Urbana, Illinois and is available online at Amazon.com at <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0964142392> or any other Amazon worldwide. To request an interview or additional information, please contact the author at <http://www.thomashollowell.com/>.

Source: Thomas Hollowell