The Human Rights Committee (HRC), a body that monitors States compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, has established the full responsibility of the Algerian authorities in the abduction of ‘’polisario’’ dissident Ahmed Khalil Mahmoud Braih.

Rendering a decision on this matter, the UNHRC regrets Algeria’s lack of cooperation, while expressing its concern at the absence, beyond the case of Ahmed Khalil Mahmoud Braih, of an effective remedy before the Algerian courts for the populations on its territory in the Tindouf camps.

The HRC was notified in November 2016 by the “Alkarama” Association of the case of Ahmed Khalil Mahmoud Braih kidnapped by DRS agents in the center of Algiers on the morning of 6 January 2009.

In its decision, the UN Committee “accepts the family’s claims and even goes beyond the individual situation of the Braih family by raising the issue of the lack of effective recourse to the Algerian courts for the populations of the Tindouf camps,” stressed the Geneva-based Association “Alkarama”.

Ahmed Khalil Mahmoud Braih had expressed his disagreement with the ‘’polisario’’ leadership on the degrading practices and serious violations committed in the camps, recalled the same source.

During a trip to Algiers in January 2009, he was approached by two individuals in the street who then forced him into a vehicle. He was then taken to an unknown location.

His children did not hear from him and went to the ‘’polisario’’ leaders to ask about his fate, but they got no answer. It was only two months later that one of the ‘’polisario’’ leaders in Algiers informed them of his detention in Blida military prison.

In its decision, the HRC found that Ahmed Khalil Mahmoud Braih is still being held in secret detention by the Algerian authorities and is a victim, along with his family, of enforced disappearance.

This situation was also recognized as a form of torture, not only against the victim, but also against his family because of the serious suffering caused by the disappearance of a relative, according to the decision of the HRC, published on Alkarama’s website.

In its decision, the UNHRC recalled Algeria’s international obligations towards the victim, his family and all persons on Algerian territory, including in the Tindouf camps.

“The Algerian State is therefore obliged to conduct a prompt, effective, exhaustive, independent, impartial and transparent investigation into the disappearance of Ahmed Khalil Mahmoud Braih and to provide the family with detailed information about the results of this investigation,” stressed the HRC, which noted that the Algerian authorities must release him immediately if he is still being held secretly and, if he is dead to return his body to his family in respect for dignity.

The UNHRC called on the Algerian authorities to prosecute the perpetrators of these serious violations and to provide reparation to the victim and his family.

With regard to the populations held against their will in the Tindouf camps, the Committee recalled that the devolution of powers by the Algerian State to the ‘’polisario’’ did not mean that the Algerian authorities would relinquish their responsibilities for the protection of human rights in the Tindouf camps. This means that the Algerian State must ensure the freedom and security of individuals, as well as access to Algerian courts for anyone in the camps, the same source said.

The Committee requests the Algerian authorities to confirm, within six months, what measures it has actually taken to follow up this decision.