

On 5 December 2021, prominent Sahrawi woman human rights defender **Sultana Khaya** was sexually assaulted once again in her home by Moroccan authorities. Sultana Khaya's sister, Luara Khaya, was also subjected to the sexual assault.

[Sultana Khaya](#) is a Sahrawi woman human rights defender whose work focuses on promoting the right of self-determination for the Sahrawi people, through participating in several peaceful demonstrations. The woman human rights defender is president of the organisation League for the Defense of Human Rights and against Plunder of Natural Resources in Boujdour.

On Sunday, 5 December 2021 at approximately 4:30am, Sultana Khaya's house was broken into by Moroccan agents. The woman human rights defender was sleeping in the same room as her sister, brother and 84-year old mother. All members of the household were zip-tied before the woman human rights defender and her sister were attacked. The agents who raided the house forcibly put a rag on Sultana Khaya, and forced her to inhale an unknown substance that caused her limbs to go numb. During the following two hours, the woman human rights defender and her sister were repeatedly gang-raped and beaten by the agents. The following 15 minutes after the attack, Sultana Khaya was forcibly injected into her left hip, which caused her to lose the feeling in her left side.

During the assault, Sultana Khaya was injected with an unknown substance, which was likely the same with which she was first injected when the human rights defender was previously attacked, sexually and physically assaulted in her home by Moroccan security forces on 8 November 2021. In that occasion, Sultana Khaya's sister and elderly mother were also subjected to the physical and sexual attack by the agents. Since the human rights defender was also previously attacked on 25 August 2021 and 10 May 2021, it emerges a pattern of targeted sexual harassment aimed at intimidating the woman human rights defender.

Sultana Khaya has been under de facto house arrest since 19 November 2020, with Moroccan security forces maintaining a heavy presence outside of her house. During this time, the woman human rights defender has been repeatedly subjected to physical, verbal and sexual assaults. On 1 July 2021, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Mary Lawlor condemned the reprisals against Sultana Khaya, and "expressed particular concern about the apparent use of violence and the threat of violence to prevent and obstruct women human rights defenders in their peaceful human rights activities in Western Sahara."

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by the latest raid, physical assault and sexual harassment carried out by Moroccan security forces against woman human rights defender Sultana Khaya and her family members. It reiterates its concern about the arbitrary house arrest, and the ongoing harassment against the woman human rights defender. Front Line Defenders believes that Sultana Khaya is being targeted solely as a result of her peaceful and legitimate human rights work.