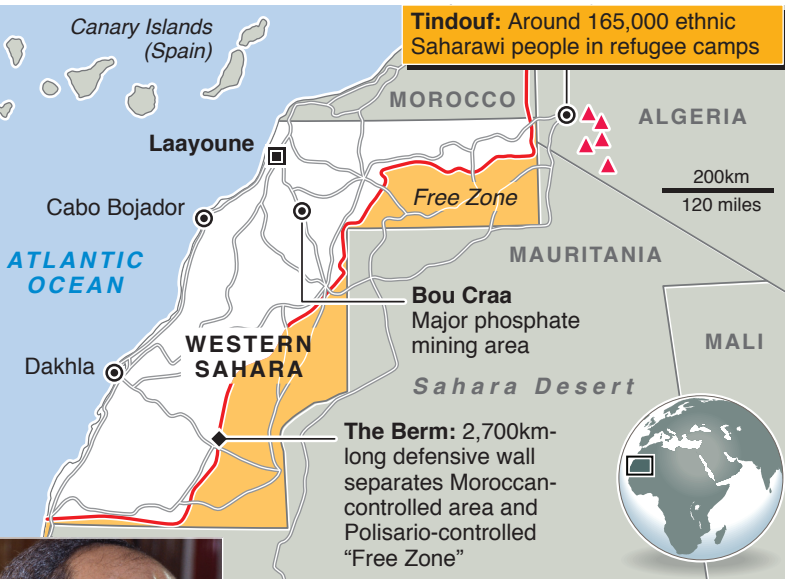


# UN warns of Mali risk to Western Sahara

UN leader Ban Ki-Moon has warned that the conflict in Mali could spill over into Western Sahara, where Morocco and the Polisario Front have been locked in a more than two-decade dispute over control



## HISTORY OF WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICT

- ▶ **1975:** Morocco takes control of most of Western Sahara as colonial power Spain withdraws
- ▶ **1976:** Polisario Front – backed by Algeria – wages guerrilla war against Moroccan army
- ▶ **1991:** UN brokers ceasefire and sends in peacekeeping mission known as **MINURSO**. Truce includes promise of referendum on self-determination, with independence as one option
- ▶ **2003 onwards:** Several rounds of UN-sponsored talks fail to achieve political solution. Polisario Front insists on right of Saharawi people to referendum. Morocco only agrees to broader autonomy
- ▶ **April 2013:** UN warns that Mali fighting could spill over into neighbouring countries and contribute to radicalization of refugee camps around Tindouf



Polisario Front proclaimed **Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)** in 1976, with government headed by **Mohamed Abdelaziz** in exile in Tindouf, Algeria