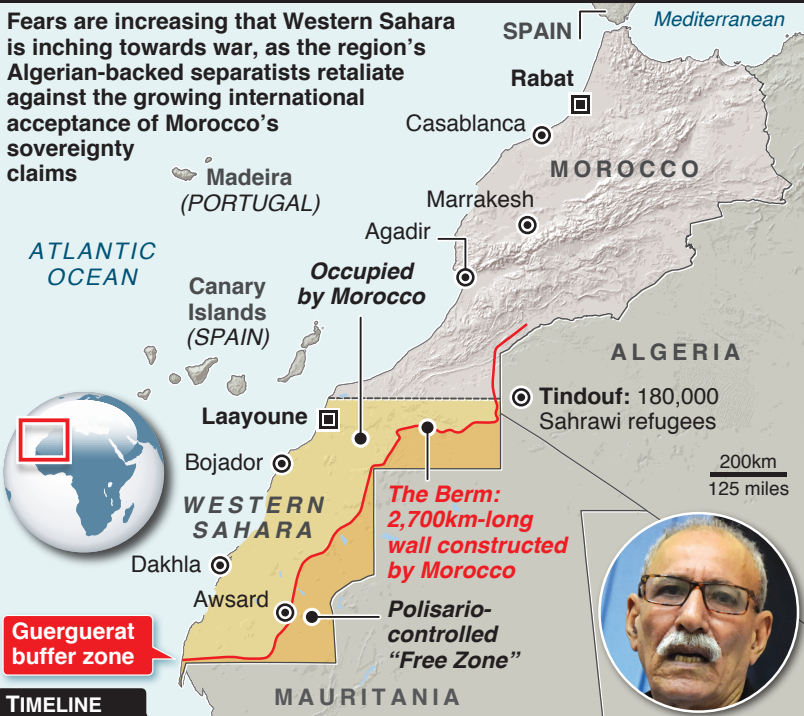


Western Sahara conflict reignites

Fears are increasing that Western Sahara is inching towards war, as the region's Algerian-backed separatists retaliate against the growing international acceptance of Morocco's sovereignty claims



TIMELINE

■ **1975:** Western Sahara annexed by Morocco as colonial power, Spain, withdraws

■ **1976:** **Polisario Front** wages guerrilla war against Moroccan army and sets up self-declared **Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic**

■ **1991:** UN-brokered truce includes promise of referendum on self-determination, with independence as one option

■ **2018:** First round of direct talks in six years between Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, and Polisario ends without progress

■ **Nov 13, 2020:** Morocco launches military operation in Guerguerat buffer zone after accusing Polisario of blocking access to Mauritania

■ **Nov 14:** Leader of Polisario, **Brahim Ghali** (above) declares group has ended commitment to 1991 ceasefire