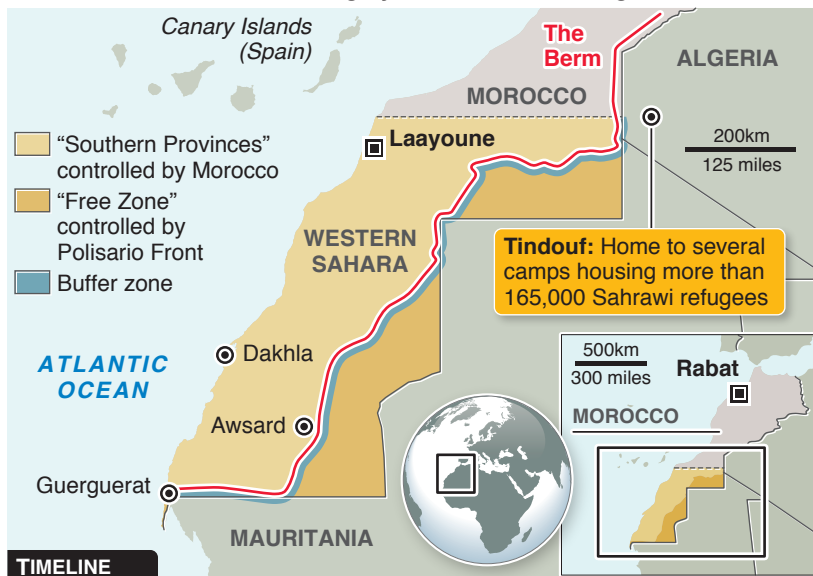


# Renewed conflict in Western Sahara

Conflict is growing in the disputed territory of Western Sahara as the pro-independence Polisario Front continues to oppose Moroccan claims of sovereignty over the vast arid region



## TIMELINE

■ **1975:** Morocco annexes most of Western Sahara after Spanish colonial forces withdraw. **Polisario Front** – indigenous Sahrawi independence movement – begins 16-year-long guerrilla war against Moroccan forces

■ **1976:** Polisario guerrillas declare **Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)**, with government-in-exile in Algeria

■ **1980s:** Morocco builds vast sand wall – “the Berm” – enclosing about four-fifths of territory within its own control and leaving tens of thousands of refugees on other side

■ **1991:** UN-brokered truce ends war and establishes **MINURSO\*** peacekeeping force. Deal promises Sahrawi independence referendum, but vote never takes place

■ **2019:** UN-led talks on territory’s future end without progress

■ **Nov-Dec 2020:** Polisario says it is quitting 1991 truce after Moroccan troops enter UN-patrolled buffer zone to reopen key road leading to Mauritania. **Tensions rise further when U.S. recognises Moroccan sovereignty over entire disputed territory in exchange for Morocco normalising relations with Israel**

\*United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Sources: AFP, BBC, ReliefWeb, Reuters

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