

MOROCCO POLISARIO FRONT

Party Portrait

The Polisario Front is a military and political indigenous independence group in Western Sahara. The governing body of the Polisario Front, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), is based in Algeria and controls further territory in refugee camps surrounding the Algerian town of Tindouf. They have announced a sovereign claim to the entirety of Western Sahara, but presently control only 15%. Morocco has erected a 2,700 km sand wall to separate their portion of Western Sahara from the Polisario Front-held territory. Morocco alleges that the Polisario Front is backed by Algeria. Algeria denies this claim, but publicly supports Western Sahara's right to self-determination. The question of Algeria's support or lack thereof has foiled peace processes in recent years, with Morocco refusing to participate unless Algeria participates and acknowledges its alleged support of the Polisario Front.

Key Interests

- Expel Morocco from Western Sahara
- Establish a Sahrawi state
- Receive sovereign recognition of Western Sahara as Polisario territory
- Return safely the approximately 90,000 displaced Sahrawi refugees. Most of these refugees reside in the Tindouf refugee camp in Algeria.

Sources of Leverage

Soft Power – The Polisario Front has the support of Algeria and some Spanish solidarity organizations
Political – The UN currently refuses to recognize either Morocco or SADR sovereignty over Western Sahara

Regional Strategy

Expel Morocco from Western Sahara; maintain strong ties with Algeria; court recognition from all sovereign states. The Polisario Front's claim to Western Sahara is currently recognized by 45 countries.

Powerful Individuals

Brahim Ghali (Secretary-General of the Polisario Front and president of SADR)

Potential Negotiation Moves

UN Talks - Reinitiate efforts to settle the sovereignty issue through a referendum via the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), with direct UN-mediated talks between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front.
Use Comparative Example - Capitalize on the use of the Western Sahara issue as a comparative example for Israel's refusal to grant Palestinians autonomy over the West Bank. Highlight the potential momentum for recognition which could be sparked over the settlement of this contextually similar situation

Internal Conflicts

In 2004, an opposition group calling itself the Front Polisario Khat al-Shahid announced its separation from the main Polisario faction. The group demands SADR reform and a return to hostilities with Morocco. However, the group has largely been sidelined due to the Polisario's refusal to engage with it, as well as its own internal fractures.

Memberships

N/A

Allies

ALGERIA

Partners

LIBYA Government of National Accord, UNITED NATIONS, UNITED STATES

Rivals

N/A

Adversaries

MOROCCO Government

Active Armed Opponents

N/A

Proxy

N/A

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

N/A

Aid Donor

ALGERIA