

2021 Conflict Risk Diagnostic: Morocco & Western Sahara

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Agenda

1. Background
2. Recent Developments
3. Stakeholders
4. Conflict Indicators
5. Conflict Scenarios



Background

1975

- Spain partitions the territory between Morocco and Mauritania
- The POLISARIO Front (PF) proclaims the territory the independent Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)

1979

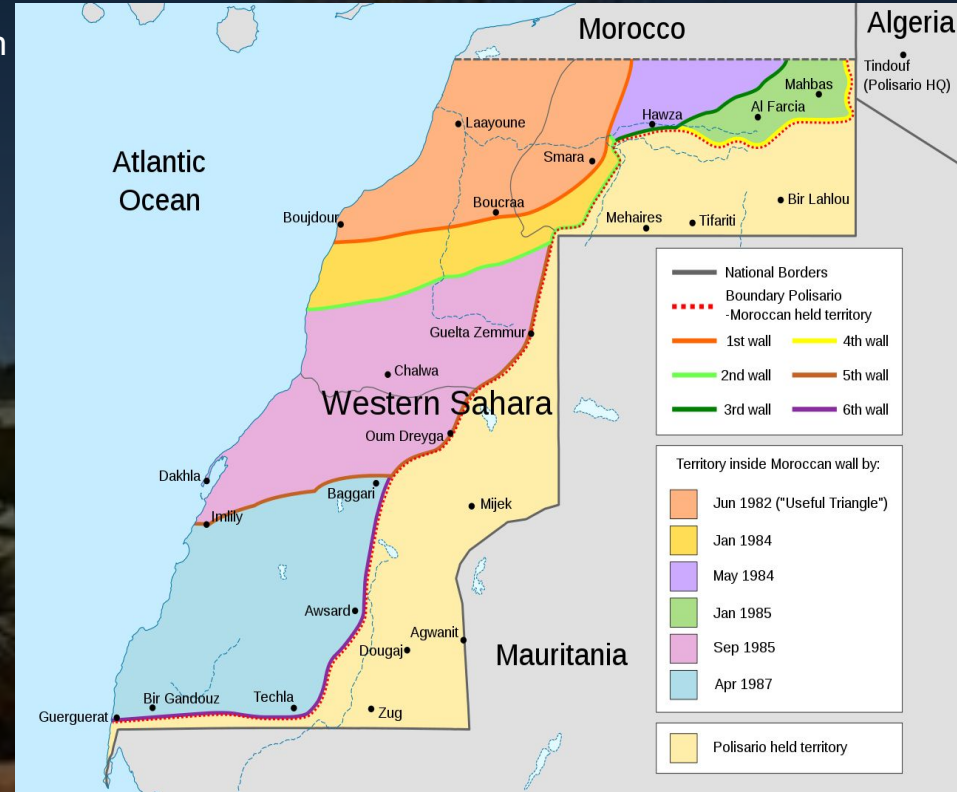
- Mauritania forms peace agreement with PF and withdraws

1975-1989

- Armed conflict between PF and Morocco

1991

- UNSC establishes MINURSO, formal ceasefire, attempts referendum



Recent Developments



Stakeholders

Morocco

Polisario/SADR

Saharawi
refugees

European
Union

United States

Algeria

African Union



Part 1: History of Armed Conflict, Governance and Political Stability, Militarization

Structural Factors

- Long history of armed conflict
- MINURSO
- Strong Moroccan Monarchy but weak political effectiveness
- SADR governing-in-exile
- Effective Moroccan Security
- Stable Moroccan armed forces size

Stabilizing Factors

- No Armed *conflict* since 1989
- Both Members of AU
- Durable Moroccan regime through Arab Spring
- Morocco upholding ceasefire

Destabilizing Factors

- Conflict at Guerguerate demilitarized buffer zone led PF to break 1991 ceasefire
- US recognition of Moroccan sovereignty
- Transformation of Moroccan armed forces

History of Armed Conflict: High Risk (Worsening)

- Further low-intensity armed *attack* along sand berm

Governance & Political Stability: Moderate Risk (Worsening)

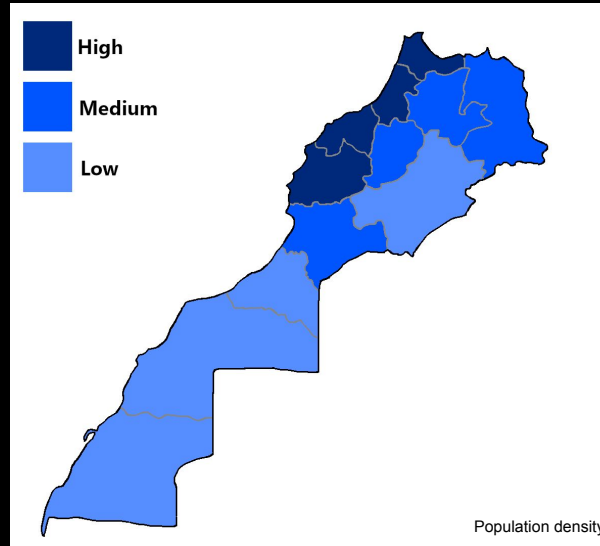
- Forestalled ceasefire & referendum

Militarization: Moderate Risk (Stable)

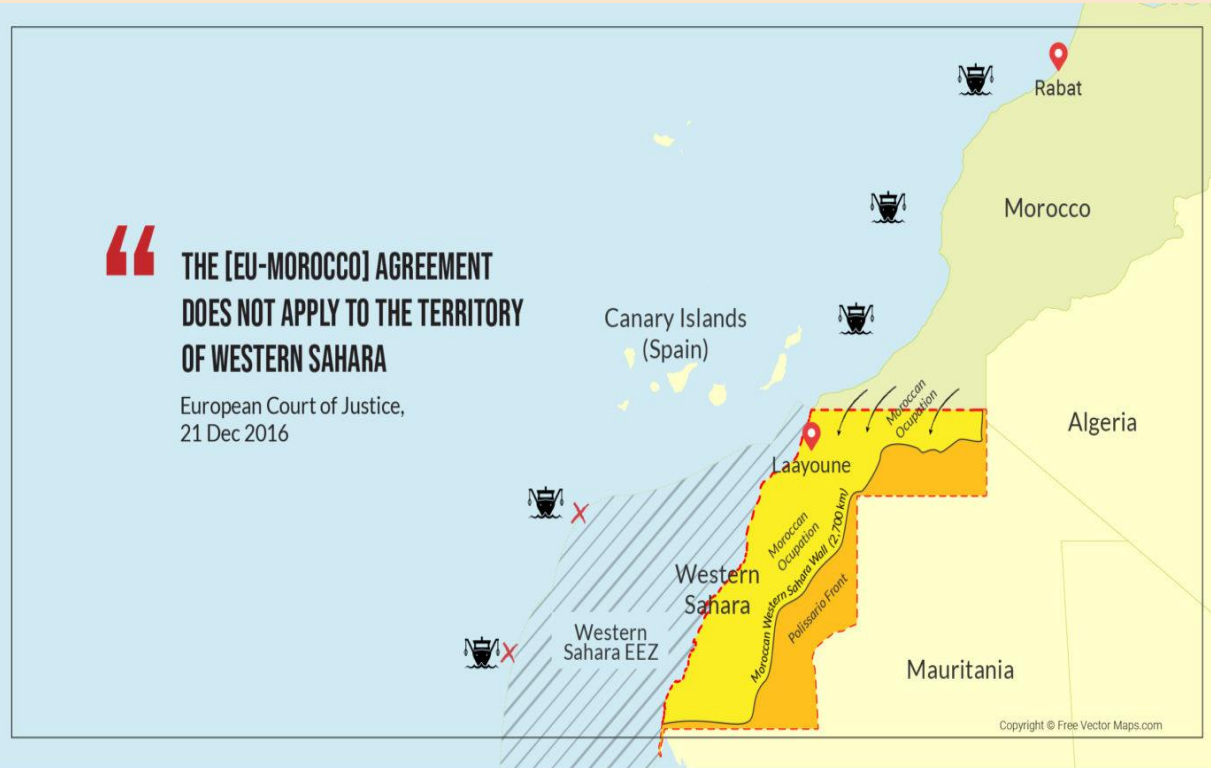
- Morocco potentially deploys modernized military equipment

Part 2: Environmental Stress, Population Heterogeneity, Demographic Stress

- Deforestation
- Water scarcity
- Ethnicity
- Language
- Religion
- Demographics



Part 3: Human Development, International Linkages, and the Economy



- Lower-medium income country
- Hostile environment for NGOs
- COVID-19: first recession since 1995
- Reduced FDI over the last 5 years
- Disputed and overturned trade agreements

Conflict Scenarios: The Next 6 Months

Best Case: Ceasefire resumes, negotiations for referendum begin

Worst Case: Heightened violence, Morocco drops commitment to ceasefire

Most Likely: Return to status quo of early 2020

