

CONGRESS RESTRICTS US MILITARY COOPERATION WITH THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO OVER WESTERN SAHARA QUESTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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After months of negotiations, Congress is set to send President Joe Biden this week the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), must-pass legislation that includes \$770 billion in funding for the Department of Defense (DoD) and related programs. A restriction on US military cooperation with the Kingdom of Morocco is part of the measure that President Biden is expected to sign into law soon.

"Morocco's lobbyists failed to block this measure and will continue to do so," said Jason Poblete, GLA President. "The people of Western Sahara are a peaceful people who cooperate with the US on regional security matters while they focus on building a free and self-governed nation. Morocco and Algeria must stop using the Sahara matter to fuel an [arms race in the region](#) or, worse, war and instability," added Poblete.

The NDAA includes the following language on Western Sahara subject to a presidential waiver:

None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2022 may be used by the Secretary of Defense to support the participation of the military forces of the Kingdom of Morocco in any multilateral exercise administered by the Department of Defense unless the Secretary determines, in consultation with the Secretary of State, that the Kingdom of Morocco is committed to seeking a mutually acceptable political solution in Western Sahara.

Last December, the United States purportedly recognized Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara as part of an agreement involving Morocco and Israel, viewed as a continuation of the Abraham Accords reached between the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Bahrain with the State of Israel. No consent was received from the Polisario or any other Western Saharan civil society group. This deal was in contravention of longstanding U.S.-recognized international law--precisely the principle that obligations may be imposed only upon another state with their consent. The people of Western Sahara were placed in the untenable position of accepting Moroccan sovereignty and ceding their rights to liberty and self-determination.

Unlike the Kingdom of Morocco, the Sahrawi embrace Western ideals, in fact their intolerance of extremism and severe punishments for traffickers and anyone associated with terrorism have caused Islamic extremists to label the Sahrawi as “too close to the West and not pious enough.” A testament to the Saharan's embrace of religious freedom is the fact that many Americans, sponsored by Christian churches, are openly living in the refugee camps and American children have even been born there to these Christian families.

"Freedom of religion, belief, and conscience is a cornerstone of a civilized nation and that is present in Western Sahara," added Jason Poblete. "The Sahrawi welcome all peoples from all faith traditions to worship and live freely. Morocco could learn a lot from them. Sadly, Morocco chooses, instead, to persecute the Saharans and pursue Cold War-era expansionist policies which, in turn, destabilize the region," concluded Poblete

The Global Liberty Alliance is part of a non-partisan international coalition that supports self-determination for Western Sahara and holding to account perpetrators of the fundamental rights of the people of Western Sahara. You can learn more about the coalition and GLA efforts on this matter at the [GLA Western Sahara page](#).

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