

# UN envoy visits Western Sahara camps in new peace push

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FILE - A Sahrawi refugee girl picks-up the laundry in the Boujdour refugee camp, Algeria, Oct. 15, 2021. The U.N. envoy for disputed Western Sahara visited refugee camps in Algeria on Saturday Jan. 15, 2022, housing those displaced by fighting decades ago, in a renewed effort to find a diplomatic solution for the territory.

Bernat Armangue

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP) — The U.N. envoy for the disputed Western Sahara visited refugee camps in Algeria on Saturday housing those displaced by fighting decades ago, in a renewed effort to find a diplomatic solution for the territory.

Staffan de Mistura's visit to camps in Smara, shown on Algerian state television, was met with skepticism by supporters of the Polisario Front, which seeks independence for Western Sahara. Morocco annexed the former Spanish colony in 1975.

Sahrawi independence activists are increasingly frustrated after decades of diplomatic deadlock, and some young people are taking up arms against the Moroccan forces they see as occupiers.

The envoy started his first trip to the region last week in Morocco, and travels next week to the Algerian capital of Algiers and Mauritania. Algeria backs the Polisario, and severed diplomatic relations with Morocco in August in a dispute linked to the Western Sahara conflict.

After seeing de Mistura, Moroccan officials reiterated the country's "commitment to the resumption of the political process conducted under the exclusive auspices of the U.N."