

# UN renews bid to resolve conflict in Western Sahara

January 17, 2022 Dorcas Funmi

The UN envoy for the disputed Western Sahara region has visited refugee camps in Algeria in a renewed bid to find a diplomatic solution to the territory.

The former Spanish colony was annexed by Morocco in 1975.

Polisario front independence activists expressed frustration at decades of diplomatic deadlock.

“We demand to the UN envoy, our independence.

We will only stop the war if we get independence, even if we all end up as martyrs.

We have nothing more to say because the UN has been lying to us for 47 years, so we want our independence”, demanded local nurse Aichatou Lahbib Tayab.

Refugee camp resident Hussin Mahmoud demands the implementation of UN’s resolutions.

“We ask the UN Secretary General and his special envoy to implement the resolutions signed by both sides.

We are not asking for anything other than our right to independence”, he said.

On Friday, the UN’s Polisario Front representative said the only way forward would be to end the current conflict.

“There is a war going on between the Sahrawi Republic and the Moroccan occupying state, and this war itself represents the first challenge that Mr.

Staffan de Mistura will have to face in order to initiate the peace process”, said Sidi Mohamed Omar, Polisario Front Representative to the United Nations.

In 2020, the Polisario Front ended a 29-year cease-fire with Morocco after a border confrontation with the Moroccan army, a decision fuelled by impatience among younger Sahrawi who demand the long awaited referendum promised by the UN.

Morocco won a major diplomatic victory in 2020 when then-President Donald Trump recognised Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in exchange for Morocco normalising diplomatic ties with Israel.