

...Polish investors discuss investment in disputed Western Sahara region

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Pro-independence Polisario Front soldiers on February 27, 2011 in the Western Sahara village of Tifariti. [DOMINIQUE FAGET/AFP via Getty Images]

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A group of investors from Poland will visit Morocco in September to examine expanding investment opportunities in the Western Sahara region, which is disputed between Rabat and the Polisario Front.

In June, Morocco's Ambassador to Poland

Abderrahim Atmoun signed a declaration of intent for new Polish business cooperation in the Western Sahara.

At the time, media reports said the agreement will promote the production of both civil and military transport and logistics equipment for Poland.

According to the *INN* Poland website, the economic delegation is expected to visit the region from 12-19 September.

The site said the delegation includes entrepreneurs interested in expanding in "one of the most interesting markets in Africa" as well as representatives of a number of Polish companies that are actively working to increase their presence in the kingdom.

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They will visit Casablanca, Dakhla and Laayoune.

Morocco has been in conflict with the Algeria-backed separatist Polisario group over the Western Sahara since 1975, after the Spanish occupation ended. It turned into an armed confrontation that lasted until 1991 and ended with the signing of a ceasefire agreement.

Rabat insists on its right to govern the region, but proposed autonomous rule in the Western Sahara under its sovereignty, but the Polisario Front wants a referendum to let the

people determine the future of the region. Algeria has been supporting the Front's proposal and hosts refugees from the region.

The 1991 ceasefire **came to an end** last year after Morocco resumed military operations in the El Guergarat crossing, a buffer zone between the territory claimed by the state of Morocco and the self-declared Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which the Polisario said was a provocation.

By launching the operation, Morocco "seriously undermined not only the ceasefire and related military agreements but also any chances of achieving a peaceful and lasting solution to the decolonization question of the Western Sahara," Brahim Ghali, leader of the Polisario Front, said in a letter to the UN.