



TRENDING [Gaza War 2023 \(/tag/gaza-war-2023\)](#) [Jabalia camp \(/tag/jabalia-camp\)](#) [Diaa al-Kahlout \(/tag/diaa-al-kahlout\)](#) [Red Sea \(/tag/red-sea\)](#)

advertisement







News (/news) > MENA (/news/mena)

US diplomat in Morocco for Western Sahara autonomy talks after Algeria visit

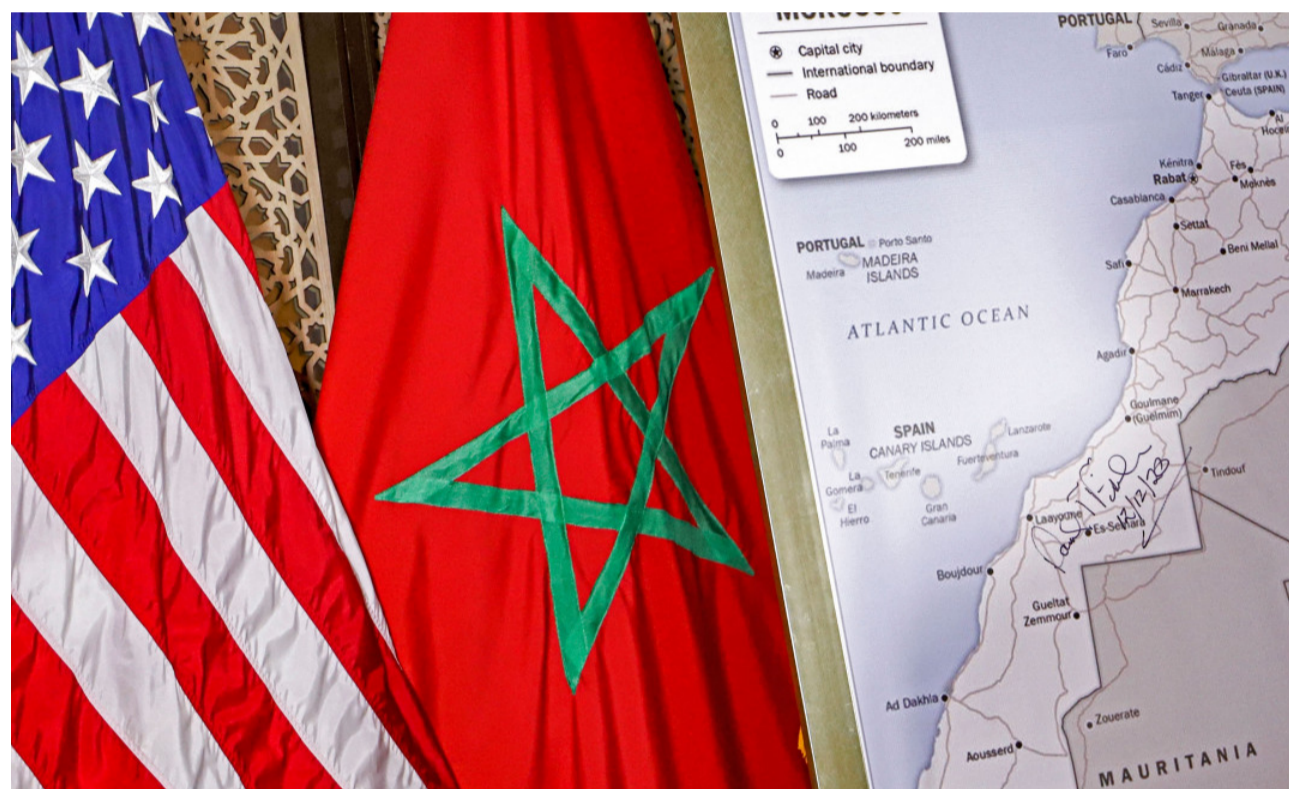
MENA(/taxonomy/term/14) 2 min read

The New Arab Staff (/taxonomy/term/69133) | 18 December, 2023

Joshua Harris arrived in Morocco on Sunday to renew US support for a Moroccan plan for the 'autonomy' of the disputed territory of Western Sahara.

[\(/#facebook\)](#) [\(/#x\)](#) [\(/#whatsapp\)](#) [\(/#reddit\)](#) [\(/#flipboard\)](#) <https://www.addtoany.com/share#url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.newarab.com%2Fnews%2Fus-diplomat-morocco-western-sahara-autonomy-talks&title=US%20diplomat%20in%20Morocco%20for%20Western%20Sahara%20autonomy%20talks>



(<https://www.newarab.com/sites/default/files/1230097507.jpeg>)

Joshua Harris arrived in Morocco on Monday for talks with the Moroccan foreign minister [AFP via Getty]

Morocco (<https://www.newarab.com/news/morocco-build-satellite-israel-aerospace-industries>)'s foreign minister Nasser Bourita will meet with US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for North African Affairs Joshua Harris on Monday for fresh discussions on Western Sahara (<https://www.newarab.com/news/morocco-and-algeria-debate-western-sahara-un>).

Harris arrived in Morocco on Sunday, where he is due to reaffirm US support for a Moroccan plan for the "autonomy" of Western Sahara (<https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-backs-moroccos-autonomy-plan-western-sahara>), the US State Department said in a statement.

His arrival in Morocco follows a visit to Algeria earlier this month (<https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2023/12/359382/western-sahara-us-deputy-secretary-joshua-harris-visits-morocco-algeria-for-consultations>), where he underlined US support for the plan for Western Sahara which would keep the disputed territory under Moroccan sovereignty.

"The United States views Morocco's Autonomy Proposal as serious, credible, and realistic, and one potential approach to satisfy the aspirations for the people of Western Sahara," Harris said (<https://dz.usembassy.gov/deputy-assistant-secretary-harris-interview-in-algiers/>) during his visit to Algeria.

"So, we are focused on doing all we can including with our Algerian friends and partners to allow the UN process to succeed."

Morocco and Algeria have for decades been at loggerheads over Western Sahara.

Algeria has long supported and hosted the Polisario Front, a group fighting for Western Sahara's independence.

Morocco controls most of Western Sahara and sees the former Spanish colony as its sovereign territory. The Polisario Front controls some 20 percent of the territory.

The Moroccan plan for Western Sahara, announced in 2006, would allow Sahrawis to run their affairs "democratically" through legislative, executive, and judicial bodies while Rabat retains control over defence and foreign affairs.

Harris visited Algeria and Morocco (<https://www.newarab.com/news/un-envoy-de-mistura-visits-disputed-w-sahara-first-time>) as well as Western Sahara in September. Violence has resurged in the disputed territory, with multiple blasts happening last October (<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/four-blasts-kill-one-injure-3-moroccos-western-sahara-authorities-2023-10-29/>).

Most Viewed ^



RELATED

[Rebuilding the forgotten Amazigh villages of Morocco](https://www.newarab.com/analysis/rebuilding-forgotten-amazigh-villages-morocco) (<https://www.newarab.com/analysis/rebuilding-forgotten-amazigh-villages-morocco>)

In-depth Basma El Atti

The US agreed to recognise Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in exchange for Rabat's normalisation of ties with Israel, through the Abraham Accords. Rabat signed the deal, which was orchestrated by the Trump administration, in 2020. Current US President Joe Biden has not shown any inclination to change the deal.

However, Washington has been wary of angering Algeria on the issue, as ties between Algeria and Russia appear to deepen.

Algeria has also abstained from condemning Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, which began in February 2022.

Last month, Algeria and Russia held their first joint military exercise (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-17/military-drills-in-gas-rich-algeria-put-focus-on-russian-ties?leadSource=verify%20wall>) on Algerian soil, and the two countries held joint naval exercises (<https://www.interfax.ru/russia/935318>) in the western Mediterranean on 8 December.

Algerian and US officials had only a few days earlier [discussed defence cooperation](https://www.newarab.com/news/algeria-us-discuss-military-cooperation-and-arms-deals#:~:text=Algeria%20has%20maintained%20good%20military%20ties%20with%20the,countries%20in%20an%20attempt%20to%20prove%20its%20neutrality.) (<https://www.newarab.com/news/algeria-us-discuss-military-cooperation-and-arms-deals#:~:text=Algeria%20has%20maintained%20good%20military%20ties%20with%20the,countries%20in%20an%20attempt%20to%20prove%20its%20neutrality.>).

Tags:

[Western Sahara \(/tag/western-sahara\)](#) [Morocco \(/tag/morocco\)](#) [Algeria \(/tag/algeria\)](#) [United States \(/tag/united-states\)](#)

[autonomy \(/tag/autonomy\)](#)

More In News

MENA(/taxonomy/term/14)



[No surprise for Egyptians over Sisi's 'foregone' victory](/news/no-surprise-egyptians-over-sisis-foregone-victory) (/news/no-surprise-egyptians-over-sisis-foregone-victory)

Thaer Mansour

Economy(/taxonomy/term/15)



[Red Sea attacks 'for Gaza' forcing costly ship reroutes](/news/red-sea-attacks-gaza-forcing-costly-ship-reroutes) (/news/red-sea-attacks-gaza-forcing-costly-ship-reroutes)

The New Arab Staff & Agencies

Most Viewed ^



'Israeli cyberattack' paralyzes petrol stations across Iran (/news/israeli-cyberattack-paralyzes-petrol-stations-across-iran)







The New Arab Staff

No surprise for Egyptians at Sisi's 'foregone' victory in presidential elections

MENA(/taxonomy/term/14) 3 min read

Thaer Mansour (/taxonomy/term/70441) - Egypt - Cairo | 18 December, 2023

On social media, many ridiculed Sisi's victory for being a foregone conclusion, while others hoped for a better tomorrow.

[\(/#facebook\)](#)
[\(/#x\)](#)
[\(/#whatsapp\)](#)
[\(/#reddit\)](#)
[\(/#flipboard\)](#)
<https://www.addtoany.com/share#url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.newarab.com%2Fnews%2Fisraeli-cyberattack-paralyzes-petrol-stations-across-iran%2F&title=US%20diplomat%20in%20Morocco%20for%20Western%20Sahara%20autonomy%20talks>



(https://www.newarab.com/sites/default/files/933524936.jpeg)

Egypt's National Elections Authority (NEA) officially announced on Monday, 18 December, that Sisi emerged victorious in the country's presidential elections after garring 39.7 million votes, or 89.6 per cent of valid votes. [Getty]

Egyptian activists and analysts are not surprised at the results of Egypt's presidential elections, which saw incumbent President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi win for a third and last term (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXOYwk0HeiM>) that ends in 2030.

Egypt's National Elections Authority (NEA) officially announced (<https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/140/514243/Egypt/Presidential-Elections-/UPDATED-Sisi-secures-third-term-in-Egypt;s--presid.aspx>) on Monday, 18 December, that Sisi emerged victorious in the country's presidential elections after garring 39.7 million votes, or 89.6 per cent of valid votes.

"The election results are not a bolt from the blue in a country facing an unforgiving economic crisis amid other external challenges such as the ongoing offensive on the Palestinian Gaza Strip bordering Egypt's North Sinai province and the civil war in neighbouring Sudan," a prominent political analyst told *The New Arab* on condition of anonymity.

Many ridiculed an already foregone conclusion on social media, while others hoped for a better tomorrow.

Most Viewed ^

Sisi during his new term will have to focus on the economy which is in shambles. He needs to quell rising discontent over high prices of food and basic commodities and a surging debt. He will also have the tough job of keeping Gaza conflict from spilling over into Egypt. — shahiraamin13 (@sherryamin13) December 18, 2023
(https://twitter.com/sherryamin13/status/1736693956774150470?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Shortly after the results were announced, Sisi appeared in a televised speech, thanking Egyptians for their political participation.

"I have been overwhelmed by the scene of you [the citizens] lining up and involvement [to vote], which clearly indicates the efficiency of all segments of the Egyptian society....It confirms how the Egyptians' will has prevailed," Sisi said, addressing the Egyptian people.

"I would like to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to all Egyptians....at a time when we have been facing a set of challenges on all levels; on top of them is the ongoing war on our eastern borders... It's as if the Egyptians collectively expressed their rejection of the war [on Gaza]," Sisi added.



"In the months preceding the vote, the wars and the economic crisis have been factors used as promotional tools by pro-regime media outlets to boost Sisi's already compromised popularity among citizens," the political analyst told *TNA*.

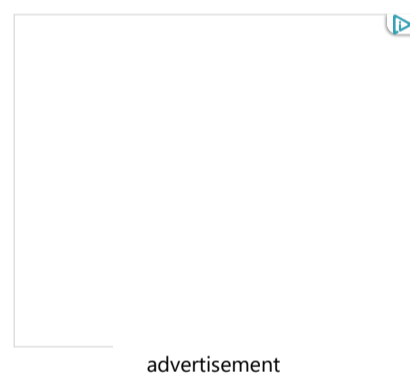
Meanwhile, many expressed relief on social media towards Sisi's triumph, being viewed as a saviour who had saved Egypt from a dark future of the country being run by Islamist President Mohamed Morsi, an affiliate of the Muslim Brotherhood group, outlawed since 2014.

Sisi came to power a year after overthrowing Morsi in a military coup when he was the defence minister.

"Like the case with ousted late President Honsi Mubarak, Egyptians have never been offered alternative options for the seat. Nor have any influential politicians or leaders allowed to appear in the political arena without being persecuted," the political analyst argued.

"A ruler in Egypt and the region in general never leaves unless faced by a coup, a revolution, or falls dead," the political sociologist said sarcastically.

Previous presidential elections from 2014 onwards gave improbable majorities to Sisi, and the detention of rival candidates marked all.



Two presidential hopefuls had earlier withdrawn from the race for not meeting the required conditions, including [Ahmed Tantawi](https://www.newarab.com/news/egypts-presidential-hopeful-ahmed-tantawi-reportedly-hacked) (<https://www.newarab.com/news/egypts-presidential-hopeful-ahmed-tantawi-reportedly-hacked>), ex-MP and journalist, and [Gameela Ismail](https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/510063.aspx) (<https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/510063.aspx>), the Al-Dostour party chairwoman and a former journalist.

Tantawi has been facing a criminal trial with 22 of his campaigners for allegedly circulating unauthorised printed forms of endorsement for the elections (<https://www.newarab.com/news/egypts-next-presidential-poll-due-december-year>), among other charges.

Tags:

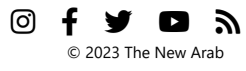
[Egypt \(/tag/egypt\)](#) [Egyptian politics \(/tag/egyptian-politics\)](#) [Egyptian elections \(/tag/egyptian-elections\)](#)
[presidential elections \(/tag/presidential-elections\)](#) [Abdel Fatah al-Sisi \(/tag/abdel-fatah-al-sisi\)](#)



(L)

Get The New Arab's newsletters straight to your inbox

Most Viewed ^



© 2023 The New Arab

(.)

Developed By  iHorizons (<https://www.ihorizons.com/>)

