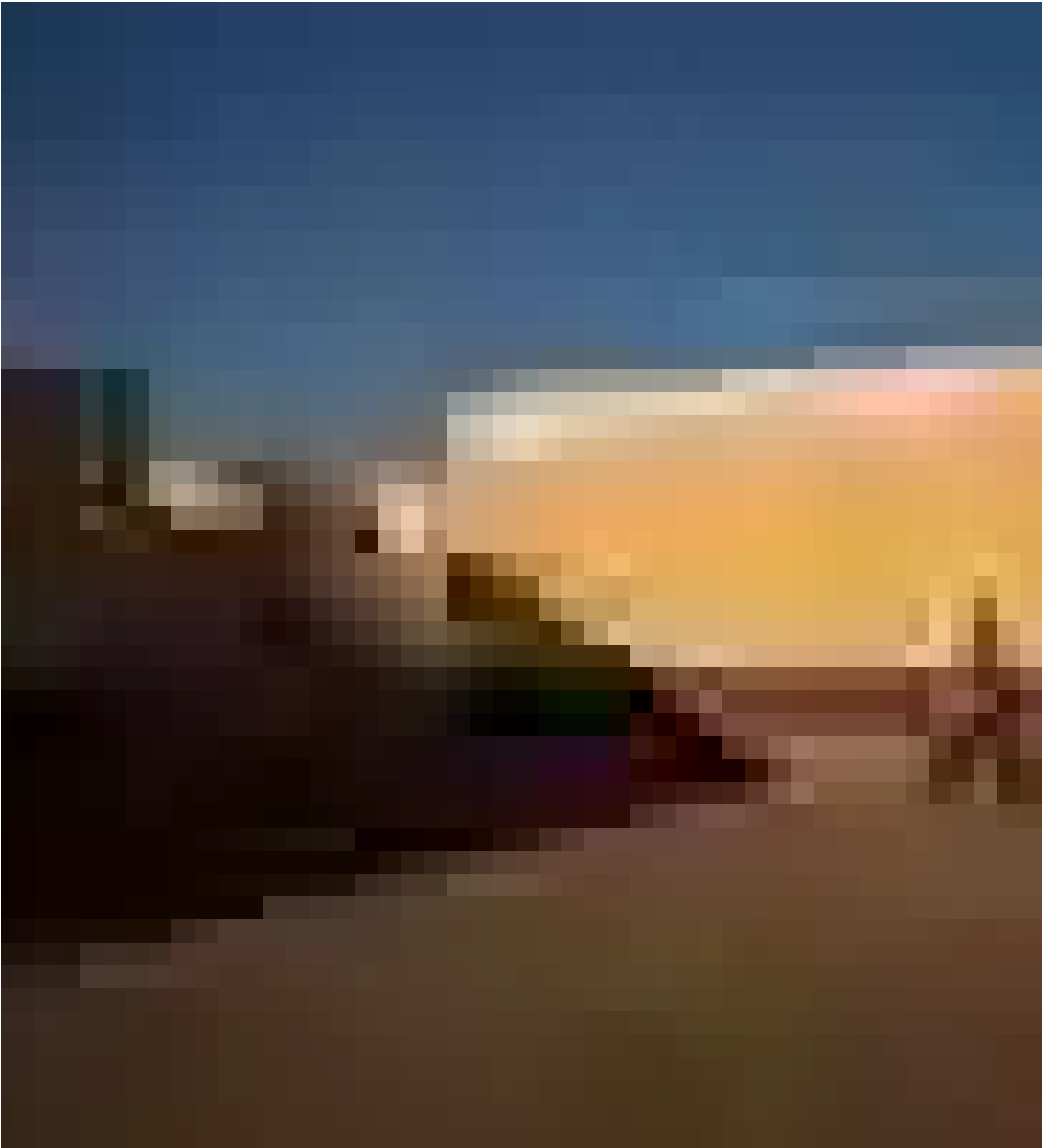


# 1 dead, 3 hurt as multiple blasts rock Western Sahara

10/29/2023

For 30 years, the resource-rich North African desert territory has been 80% controlled by Morocco. But three years ago, the Algeria-backed Polisario Front renewed its armed struggle for independence.





Sahara is the last African colonial state yet to achieve its independence

*Image: Bernat Armangué/AP Photo/picture alliance*

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Four explosions were reported in the city of Smara in Morocco-controlled [Western Sahara](#), local authorities said on Sunday.

One man was killed and three others injured in the blasts, which also damaged two houses, according to a statement by officials.

The AFP news agency cited local authorities as saying the blasts hit three different neighborhoods of Smara.

Two people who suffered serious injuries were transferred to a hospital in Laayoune, 200 kilometers (around 125 miles) west of Smara.

Images on social media, which cannot be verified, show the partially collapsed roof of an empty house as well as some metal debris.

## **Police open investigation into blasts**

The judicial police were investigating the source and nature of the projectiles that hit the residential area, judicial authorities said in a statement.

The attorney general "has entrusted the investigation team with carrying out the necessary technical and ballistic expertise to identify the origin and nature of the projectiles," said a statement quoted by Morocco's MAP news agency.



Situated in North Africa, Western Sahara has been mired in conflict since 1975 when **former colonial power Spain** withdrew from the territory.

That sparked a 15-year war between the Algeria-backed Polisario Front and Morocco for control over the territory.

A 1991 cease-fire deal gave control of 80% of the desert region to Morocco and Polisario, through the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, controls the rest and continues to seek an independent state.

Morocco has said autonomy is the most it can offer as a political solution.

## Renewed fight for independence

In November 2020, Polisario said it had resumed its armed struggle.

**Most of the fighting** was described by the United Nations as "low intensity," and occurring mostly in the uninhabited eastern part of the Morocco-built security wall.

The UN Security Council has urged the parties to the conflict to seek a mutually acceptable solution.

On Thursday, the Polisario Front said in a statement that it had "targeted strongholds of Moroccan occupation forces near Hanka Houria" in the Smara region.

"The attacks by the Sahrawi army continue against the Moroccan occupation forces, which are suffering heavy human and material losses along the wall of shame," it added.

The wall, which was erected by Morocco in the 1980s, stretches over 2,700 kilometers (around 1,677 miles) and separates the Morocco-controlled part of Western Sahara from the territory the Polisario considers "liberated."