

UN welcomes moves to restart negotiations on Western Sahara



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UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council has approved a resolution welcoming stepped up efforts to try to restart negotiations to end the 42-year conflict over the mineral-rich Western Sahara between Morocco and the Polisario Front.

Morocco annexed Western Sahara in 1975 and fought the Polisario Front until the UN brokered a cease-fire in 1991. A peacekeeping mission established to monitor it was also mandated to help prepare a referendum on the territory's future that has never taken place.

Wednesday's vote on the US-sponsored resolution extending the mission's mandate until April 30, 2019, was 12-0 with Russia, Ethiopia and Bolivia abstaining.

Bolivia's UN Ambassador Sasha Llorentty Soliz welcomed an upcoming roundtable of key parties but complained that the resolution neglected the crucial issue of self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.
