

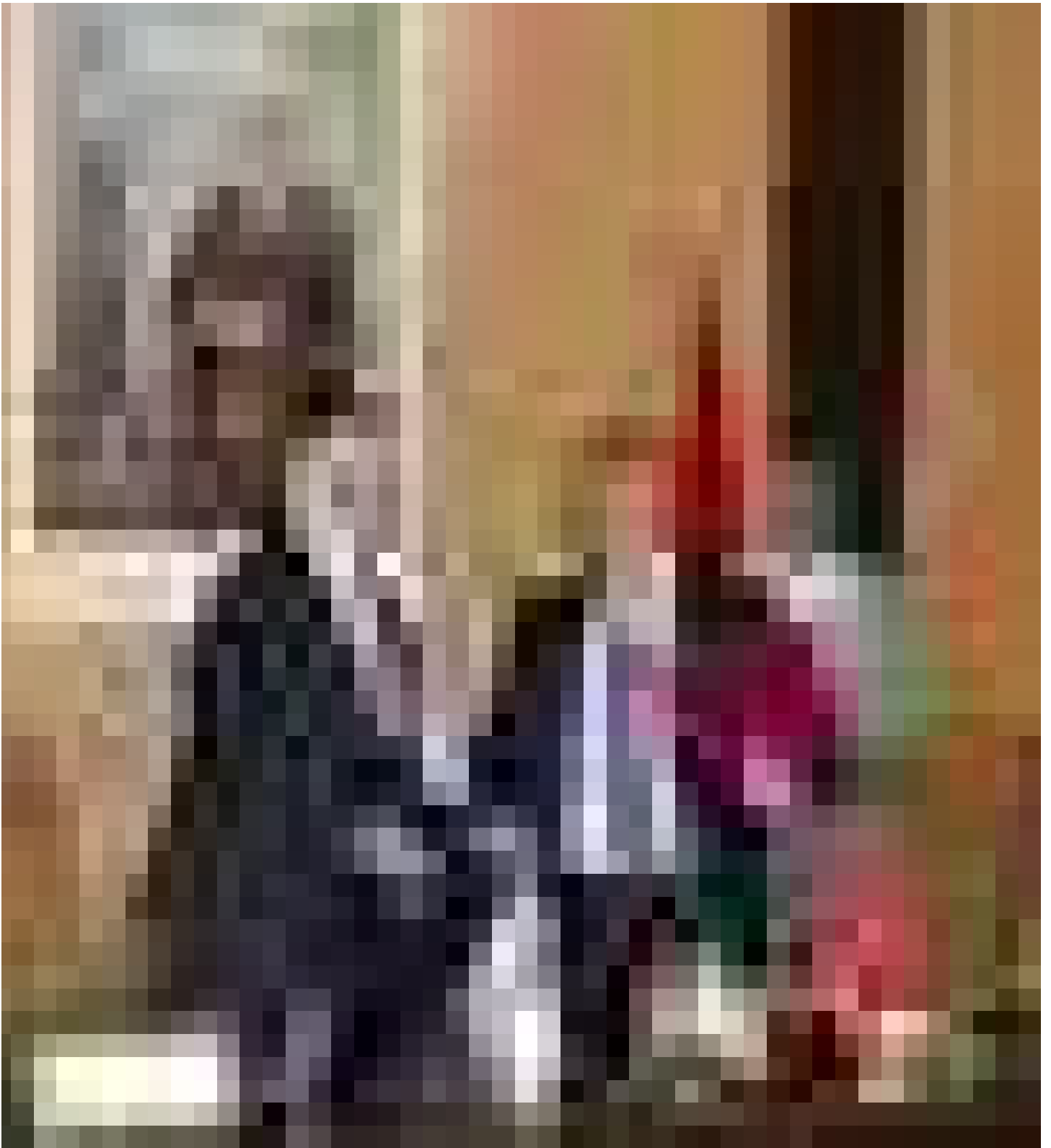
CONFLICTS **MOROCCO**

Israel recognizes Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara

07/18/2023

The disputed region is also claimed by the Algerian-backed Polisario Front. Morocco established diplomatic ties with Israel in late 2020, with a string of other Arab countries.

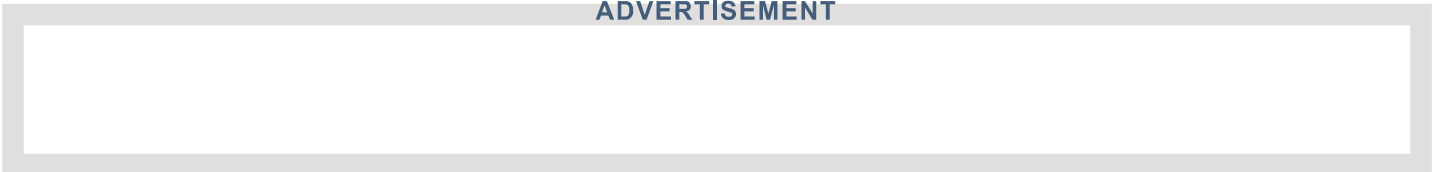
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... and Israel established diplomatic ties in late 2020

Image: AFP

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Israel has recognized Rabat's sovereignty over the disputed Western Sahara region, which the separatist movement Polisario Front claims as its territory, both [Israel and Morocco announced](#) on Monday.

A statement from the Israeli prime minister's office said the country was considering opening a consulate in Western Sahara's Dakhla.

Morocco's royal palace had earlier announced the decision, saying it was expressed in a letter from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Moroccan King Mohammed VI.

The Israeli position "will be sent to the United Nations, regional and international organizations," the statement quoted the letter as saying.

What is the Western Sahara conflict?

The Western Sahara is a stretch of land south of Morocco, mostly bordering Mauritania, with a small part sharing the Algerian border.

Since the Spanish colonization of the region ended in 1975, Morocco annexed Western Sahara, sparking a 15-year conflict with the separatist Polisario Front movement, which is supported by Algeria.



sario Front renewed its conflict with Morocco in 2020

Image: RYAD KRAMDI/AFP/Getty Images

The conflict came to a halt with a 1991 cease-fire agreement brokered by the United Nations. However, the Polisario Front renewed the conflict in

2020, declaring the entire Western Sahara a "war zone."

A year later, Algiers severed diplomatic ties with its western neighbor, amid mounting tensions.

Israeli-Moroccan ties

Diplomatic ties between Israel and Morocco were only established in 2020, as other Arab countries changed their decades-long stance on Israel and established relations with it.

Then US President Donald Trump announced the Washington's recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over the Western Sahara as a result.

Israeli foreign minister Eli Cohen said recognizing Moroccan sovereignty over the region would "strengthen the relations between the countries and between the peoples and the continuation of cooperation to deepen regional peace and stability."

rmt/jsi (AFP, AP, Reuters)